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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Are you satisfied with Gov. Benigno Fitial's explanation relating to the temporary release of a federal detainee?

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INSIDE

Haiti Crisis

Prayers of thanksgiving and cries for help rose from a roofless cathedral in Haiti.

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Car of the Year

The Ford Fusion Hybrid has won the 2010 car of year award.

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Avatar Rules

'Avatar' won best drama at the Golden Globes and picked up the directing honor for James Cameron.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Construction firm sells assets due to stalled Tinian casino project

Bridge Investment Group: 'Culprit' is federalization

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

China-based TinYuan Construction Group, the firm hired by Bridge Investment Group LLC to build its $40 million to $50 million casino and condominiums project on Tinian, has started selling its assets after waiting nearly a year for a notice to proceed with the project.

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BASED ON AUDIT REPORTS AS FAR BACK AS 1997

$6.3M yet to be recovered

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Government agencies, as well as the Office of the Attorney General, have yet to collect a total of $6.3 million from former and current government officials and contractors who were either overpaid or improperly spent taxpayers' money based on Office of the Public Auditor reports released, some of them as far back as 1997, 1998 and 1999.

Pai

See $6.3M on Page 4

'WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?'

Visiting Prof. Felix Asade, founder-president of the Greater Nigeria Congress, delivers a keynote address at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day program at the American Memorial Park's Visitor Center in Garapan yesterday afternoon. Asade spoke on this year's theme of the MLK Day celebration in the CNMI, "Where do we go from here?" Inset shows posters and artwork featuring famous African-American men and women on display at the center. HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

See story on Page 2.

Jerry Tan named *Guam Business* Executive of the Year

From left, Guam first lady Joanne Camacho, Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, his wife Lydia Tan, and Guam Gov. Felix Camacho. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan was chosen as this year's *Guam Business* Executive of the Year, a prestigious recognition given out every year to the region's most respected and accomplished business persons.

Tan, along with his wife Lydia, received the honor during a ceremony held at the Hyatt Regency Guam on Saturday attended by Guam Gov. Felix Camacho.

Tan said he is humbled by the honor.

"I am very humbled as there

See JERRY TAN on Page 4

Lawmakers on wait-and-see in 'massage' controversy, fallout

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is taking a wait-and-see approach involving Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's request to temporarily release a federal

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Trust fund fails to meet Dec. shutdown target. **PAGE 3**

85 pct. of juvenile delinquents are repeat offenders. **PAGE 4**

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Local

'Obama's emergence a symbol of a living dream'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The election of Barrack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America in January last year may have realized in part the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but it is merely a step toward fulfilling King's dream, which is to see a new America for all, according to the keynote speaker in yesterday's Martin L. Luther King Jr. Day commemoration.

Speaking before the crowd at the American Memorial Park theater, Professor Felix Asade said that when King spoke about the dream he had for America in 1963, perhaps nobody knew that that in an obscure place like Hawaii, a man of African descent was born two years earlier in 1961. Asade said it took some 46 long years for the dream to become a partial reality when Obama, whose father was an African from Kenya, became the president of America.

"The whole world stood still. History has been made and now it would appear, the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King has been finally realized. Contrarywise, the struggle has just begun," Asade said.

He pointed out that people might think that Obama's election is sufficient success for African-Americans but in reality, the emergence of an African-American as president is something to rejoice over, given the odds against Negroes from century to century.

Asade

"This is where we are now and if we must answer the question of where we go from here, we might need to deprive ourselves of some indulgent habits like sentiments and emotions. The overall picture is definitely beyond the issue of an African-American becoming president, though it surely helps to give the sense of possibilities in God's own country," Asade said.

Where do we go from here?

He said African-Americans should rejoice in Obama's victory in office but beyond the attendant euphoria of electioneering victory.

"The emergency of President Obama is a symbol of a living dream and as welcome as this is to every African-American, the dream has not yet been fulfilled in totality," Asade said, adding that although Obama's rise to power signifies the beginning of "good times" it does not of itself constitute the fulfillment of other parts of Dr. King's dreams.

Asade emphasized that with the political change thus achieved by virtue of the 2008 presidential election, African-Americans require equal strength and a sense of direction with purpose to achieve social and economic change as well.

Asade said Dr. King had a dream because he did not waste time and prepared himself mentally and exercised himself spiritually.

"The future belongs to the youth. They will complete the dream but only when they come to realize that the whole African-American dream depends on them. The African-American youth should take hold of their present to articulate their future as peacefully, as constructively as possible," Asade said.

Unconditional beneficiaries

Asade emphasized that all Americans, regardless of the color of their skin or their geographical location, should be unconditional beneficiaries of the immense wealth of America and should all work together toward a better America. The elimination of poverty among the minority should be a primary aim of such an alliance, he said.

He believes that sustainable professional and business alliances are best put in place at the grassroots level, with the aim of expanding the American economy horizontally.

"This could only happen when affected people themselves take the initiative to form viable and result-oriented economic, industrial and professional alliances," he added.

Asade added that when American youths acquire education with all seriousness, it is a way to harness the dream of King to build a happier and more prosperous America.

Asade is a professor, instructor, missionary, and administrator. He was secretary-general of the National Union of Bankers in Nigeria in 1983-1988, municipal chairman of Nigeria's Labor Congress in 1988-199, and founder-president of Greater Nigeria Congress in 2006 to present. He is actively involved in Christian ministry around the world and has authored 33 books on various disciplines. He is an alumnus of the graduate school of business Heriot Watt University, Scotland U.K.

Other events

In yesterday's commemoration, senior student Ryan Ortizo gave an outstanding interpretation of King's famous speech, "I have a dream."

Ortizo, along with a handful of students from three islands, were also recognized by the African-American Cultural Preservation Committee for their active involvement and participation in this year's celebration.

Over a hundred entries were received by the organizers for the poster-making contest.

AACPC president attorney Joe Hill also commended the sponsors and guests in yesterday's event.

Prior to the ceremony, a forum on cultural diversity, domestic violence and equality of women was conducted in the morning celebration by the Empty Vessel Ministry Foundation on Saipan.

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BACCARAT CHAMPION JAYVEE VALLEJERA

Masatomo Chiba, fourth from right, pumps his fist and holds up a celebratory glass of champagne after winning Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino's 2010 Baccarat Challenge, held over the weekend at the lone casino on Tinian. Chiba, who works in real estate in Japan, earned for himself the grand prize of $70,000, against over a hundred, mostly Japanese, crowd of players. He is joined in this picture by a couple of friends who had also participated in the tournament, and Tinian Dynasty casino staff led by Tournament director Tony Jackson, leftmost.

Trust fund fails to meet Dec. shutdown target

Bellas' fees include $315 for drafting letter to editor, $270 for talking to media

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Garment Workers Trust Fund failed to meet its December 2009 deadline to shut down operations because the trustees want to give more time to former garment workers to cash their checks.

While the trust fund's investment account will be closed, trust fund chair Timothy Bellas said the trustees want the court's approval to wait until the end of February 2010 to "close out" their operations funds.

"The checks which have been issued and are still outstanding prevent the closing of the GWTF Operations accounting until some adequate period passes for workers in foreign countries, who were mailed checks, have an opportunity to cash them," Bellas said.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson had ordered the trust fund in December to make an effort close operations within 30 days.

In his report filed Thursday, Bellas disclosed that there were only 10 checks mailed to workers in foreign countries and that if any of those checks or any of those picked up in Saipan are not cashed by Feb. 28, 2010, a stop payment will be placed on all uncashed checks.

He said the $625,000 charitable donations to 14 non-profit organizations will also be via checks drawn on operation funds.

Bellas said the trustees propose to use any residual funds that may be available to pay for final closing operational costs and fees.

He said the trustees also propose to use any further remainder for the repatriation of workers in February. In the event there are no such requests, Bellas said they want to donate further residual money to one or more of the charities already approved by the court.

The trust fund is in charge of distributing the funds that remain of the $20-million settlement related to the class action against the garment industry.

Attorney's fees

In his report, Bellas is asking for payment in the amount of $7,274 for the period from Oct. 1, 2009, to Jan. 14, 2010.

The biggest amount is $765, which Bellas said he incurred in drafting a request for approval of the charitable donations and in drafting a request so that there will be no need for another motion.

Bellas is also asking for payment of $315 for finalizing a letter to the editor. He is also charging $270 for what he calls "conference out of office with members of the press" and telephone calls about the proposed distribution of funds.

For his operational expenses in the last quarter, Bellas said the amount approved was $3,133.04, while wages and taxes for one part time employee and other operational expenses is $6,275.29.

During this past quarter, Bellas said, the trust fund was able to help 16 former garment workers who were referred by the CNMI Department of Labor for repatriation. He said the amount spent for airfare and $100 in incidental travel expense funds per worker totaled $11,489.

Medical assistance to some workers amounted to $10,000, Bellas said.

The trust fund also issued 215 checks to garment workers in the amount of $350 each. Out of the 215 checks, 169 checks were picked up or mailed to individuals on the Labor/Ombudsman's lists.

Bellas said the trust currently has on hand $640,194.73. The final amount, he said, could increase if any of the checks picked up or already mailed to workers are not cashed before the accounts are closed.

Bellas chairs the trust fund. The other trustees are former California Supreme Court justice Cruz Reynoso and former Washington State Supreme Court chief justice Richard Guy.

Man allegedly sexually abused girl in 2004

The Office of the Attorney General has filed charges against a 33-year-old man who allegedly sexually abused a minor six years ago.

The OAG charged Walter Taitingfong with sexual assault in the first degree, sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree, and disturbing the peace.

Assistant attorney general George Hasselback stated in the charging information that Taitingfong sexually assaulted and abused a then 14-year-old girl on Dec. 2, 2004.

Meanwhile, the OAG charged a 51-year-old man for allegedly assaulting and stalking a woman on Tinian last year.

The government charged Edgardo A. Althriva with assault and battery, and stalking in the second degree.

Hasselback stated in court papers that Althriva assaulted the victim on Oct. 24, 2008.

The prosecutor said that, on the same date the defendant also repeatedly engaged "in non-consensual contact by touching, grabbing, striking, punching, and attempting to punch" the victim and "threatening to continue following and harassing" her wherever she went. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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85 pct. of juvenile delinquents are repeat offenders—DCCA

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A significant number of juvenile delinquents detained at the Kagman Juvenile Detention Facility in 2007 and 2008 were repeat offenders, according to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

DCCA Secretary Melvin Faisao disclosed that roughly 85 percent of detained youths at the Kagman facility are classified as "recidivists."

At the same time, majority of these youth detainees re-entered the facility for burglary and theft—the most common offenses committed, Faisao said. Next are assault and battery.

He noted that in 2007, the Kagman jail took in 150 repeat offenders. In 2008, the number slightly went down to 143.

Faisao said this pattern in the type of offenses committed by recidivist youths strongly suggest that DCCA and other health and law enforcement agencies must team up to find solutions that will help lift families from poverty, prevent youth delinquency, and combat the rampant presence of illegal drugs in the community.

DCCA records show that from January to December 2007, the agency had 198 total juvenile detainees: 163 males and 35 females.

In 2008, total population at the Kagman facility was almost the same at 196, with 180 males and 16 females.

Records for calendar year 2009 are not yet available.

'Over 400 juvenile cases filed in 6 yrs.'

Based on the 2008 annual report of the Judiciary, there were a total of 401 juvenile cases filed in six years from 2003 through 2008.

Judiciary records show that 48 juvenile cases were brought before the courts in 2003. This went up to 62 cases in 2004; 87 cases in 2005, and a large jump of 101 cases in 2006 before going down to 66 cases in 2007, and further down to 37 cases in 2008.

Of the 101 filed cases in six years, 69 of them were for offenders with more than one case filed against them.

Seven juvenile delinquents had more than one case filed against them in 2003. In 2004, there were 10; in 2005, 12; in 2006, 25; in 2007, eight; and in 2008, seven.

JERRY TAN

From Page 1

were seven other very worthy nominees for this award. This award has inspired me to continue my service to the community while managing our company," he said in a statement.

As this year's awardee, Tan is featured on the cover of the *Guam Business* January-February issue, copies of which were released during the Saturday gala dinner.

Tan was the class valedictorian of 1979 of John F. Kennedy High School and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Guam with a bachelor's degrees in accounting and management.

He is married to Lydia Tan and they have one daughter, 9-year-old Nathania.

Besides being the president of Tan Holdings Corp., Jerry is also the president of Asia Pacific Hotels, which runs the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan and Guam, Saipan Grand Hotel, and Century Hotel; president of CTSI Logistics; and a director of the Luen Thai Group, an international conglomerate specializing in apparel manufacturing, logistics services and software development. Tan is also the vice chairman of the nonprofit organization Tan Siu Lin Foundation, which was formed in 2002 and named after his father.

He is the current chairman of the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors and a past president and current board member of the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

In addition to these, he is also the president of the Chinese Association of Saipan, president of the NMI Football Association, executive committee member of the East Asia Football Federation, president of the Saipan Bowling Association, and a former director of the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Tan was among the eight nominees who vied for the award, which recognizes executives who made outstanding contributions to the local business community and raised the bar in which they are involved.

Tan, who was the only nominee from the CNMI, was joined on the shortlist of nominees by Corine Berking, general manager, Dewitt Moving & Storage; Hee K. Cho, chief executive officer, JMSH LLC; Matthew Giger, chief business development officer, iConnect; Robert Marks, operations manager, Parsons Corp.; James A. Martinez, president, Guam Contractors' Association; Jay R. Shedd, president and CEO, Docomo Pacific; and Sinforoso M. Tolentino, administrative partner, Carlsmith Ball LLP.

In 2005, the same organization conferred the prestigious award to Dave Sablan, also an executive of Tan Holdings Corp.

According to Ed Arriola, manager of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Tan was first nominated to the same recognition in 2004 but it was only this year that he actually bagged the award.

LAWMAKERS

From Page 1

inmate and Corrections Commissioner Dolores M. Aldan who allowed the release.

EAGI Committee chair Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) said yesterday that the committee will wait for any federal investigation into the alleged unauthorized release of the jailed masseuse before taking action.

"At this time, I don't want to interfere with any federal investigation. Once they're done, I will sit with other members of the committee and decide what we should do," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

But Cruz said that in general, "nobody is above the law."

The EAGI Committee handles, among other things, investigations on alleged criminal acts of government corruption and related subjects.

Other members of the 17th Senate and House of Representatives are mum on the issue, including whether they would open an investigation and determine whether or not Fitial's actions rise to the level of impeachment and removal.

Besides Cruz, only three other lawmakers were willing to go on record on the issue.

House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) earlier said the inmate in question is under federal jurisdiction, and it would be "up to the federal government to do what they want to do."

Rep. Ramon "Ray" Tebuteb (R-Saipan) said he will bring up the issue during the House Minority bloc's meeting today.

He had said that the release of a federal inmate to provide massage is an important matter that is impossible to ignore, especially because of its possible implications on the CNMI-federal relations and the governor's involvement.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), for his part, earlier asked people not to rush judgment, asking them to know all the facts first. He had also said that it is "way too early to suggest" that Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos take over as governor.

Other agencies such as the Office of the Public Auditor, Department of Labor and other agencies with stake on the issue have yet to respond to questions involving the controversy.

Press secretary Angel A. Demapan said yesterday that the Fitial administration has no further comment at this time beyond the statement that was released on Thursday last week.

The story of Fitial's request to have his massage therapist, 28-year-old Qing Mei Cheng, released from jail to give him a massage in the early morning hours of Jan. 8 due to severe back pain continues to receive international media coverage.

$6.3M

From Page 1

The reported violations and misspending occurred as far back as 1993.

For example, in 1997, OPA issued an audit report with recommendation to the then secretary of the Department of Finance to require the then director of the Rota Health Center to return $4,282.02 taken from the RHC funds and for reimbursement for cost of a washing machine for the period December 1993 to March 1996.

This case was referred to the OAG which, as of June 2009, has yet to inform OPA whether it will pursue legal action for recovery.

All these were included in OPA's latest semi-annual report on audited agencies' implementation of audit recommendations as of June 30, 2009. The report, signed by Pubic Auditor Michael Pai, was released on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010.

Of the $6.3 million in public funds yet to be recovered, over $3.7 million depend on the action of government agencies while over $2.6 million were referred to the OAG for legal action to recover monies improperly spent.

OPA said it met with the OAG on Dec. 1, 2009, to discuss the status of these referrals.

Attorney General Ed Buckingham advised OPA that the OAG will conduct further review of these referrals and will provide OPA the results of its review.

"As such, the status of these referrals remains unchanged," OPA said.

OPA maintains an audit recommendations tracking system to monitor the implementation and resolution of OPA audit recommendations. Recommendations issued by independent auditors are also included in the tracking system for information purposes.

OPA did not issue audit reports in the first six months of 2009, but it included in its latest tracking report a total of 147 recommendations from 12 recent audit reports released by private certified public accountants firms.

In its report, OPA recognized the Marianas Visitors Authority for having no reportable audit findings in its Annual Financial and Compliance audit report for the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30, 2008, conducted by a private CPA firm.

In the first half of 2009, OPA also issued two procurement decisions that involved appeals to OPA.

Delinquent recommendations

OPA said the number of delinquent recommendations decreased by 13 or 31 percent, from 42 in 2008 to 29 during the first six months of 2009.

There are nine agencies with delinquent recommendations as of June 30, 2009.

They include the Commonwealth Ports Authority, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., the Department of Finance, the Department of Public Lands, the Department of Public Safety, the Marianas Visitors Authority, Northern Marianas College, NMI Retirement Fund, and the Public School System.

The recommendations addressed to these agencies were classified as "delinquent" as these agencies did not inform OPA within the last 180 days of any corrective action taken to implement OPA's recommendations.

Coordinating group

The provisions of 1 CMC §2307 established the Interagency Audit Coordinating Advisory Group (Coordinating Group) consisting of the presiding officer and minority leader of each house of the Legislature, the Secretary of Finance, and the Special Assistant for Management and Budget.

According to the law, the Coordinating Group is to review all audit reports of the public auditor, who will discuss the manner in which audit recommendations can be implemented with the assistance of the members of the Coordinating Group.

However, the Coordinating Group has not met since 2000. But OPA said it continues to issue follow-up letters semi-annually to agencies with outstanding recommendations requesting for information on actions taken to address its recommendations.

Additionally, telephone follow-up procedures were also conducted to encourage agencies to respond to OPA's follow-up letters. Moreover, meetings are held when requested by agencies to discuss and clarify actions required to address OPA's recommendations.

CONSTRUCTION

From Page 1

Bridge Investment halted construction of its staff housing early last year, and has not resumed since then.

The firm also has yet to issue a notice to proceed to TinYuan Construction Group to build the casino.

Phillip Mendiola-Long, executive vice president of Bridge Investment Group-CNMI operations, however, pointed out yesterday that Bridge Investment is not pulling out its casino project.

"The only assets being sold are from the construction firm, TianYuan Construction from China, which has been waiting on our notice to proceed for nearly one year," Mendiola-Long said in an e-mail response to *Saipan Tribune* questions.

Mendiola-Long, who is also the president of the Tinian Chamber of Commerce, blames the Nov. 28 federal takeover of CNMI immigration and the absence of U.S. Department of Homeland Security final regulations on the transitional worker program and investor program for the delay in the casino project.

"Federalization has been the main culprit of our inability to issue the notice to proceed because there are no DHS regulations issued which allow the new hiring of our necessary construction workers. Chinese nationals are not allowed to be issued H2," he said.

Tinian residents have started asking whether Bridge Investment will still pursue its casino project.

Bridge Investment hired Tianyuan Construction Group in 2008 to build the casino project on 75,000 square feet of land that the company has leased for 55 years.

Mendiola-Long also said that Bridge Investment has been unable to sell condominium units "until DHS issues CNMI investor rules."

"The only rules out are rules related to existing CNMI investors with CNMI investor status as of Nov. 28, 2009. Therefore, it does not make sense for us to begin construction on a project that is unable to sell condos to the Chinese market. Our fate is dependent upon the regulatory environment the DHS creates for investors and workers from China, both of which have yet to be released," he said.

The comment period for DHS's interim final rule on the CNMI transitional worker program wrapped up on Jan. 8. Over 130 comments were posted online as of that date, and DHS earlier said it will consider comments submitted in the final rule.

Early last year, Bridge Investment said it's "re-evaluating" its plan to build a casino and condominiums project on Tinian based on the global economic crunch and the federal takeover of CNMI immigration.

Bridge Investment secured a license to operate a casino on Tinian in 2005. It earlier planned to build a $200 million project on Tinian, but scaled it down to $40 million-$50 million in early 2008.

Bridge Investment's project, called Tinian Oceanview Resort and Casino, would have had 396 total rooms—268 declared condominium units and 128 hotel rooms—and 30,000 square feet of casino/banquet area. It projected to create 936 new jobs on Tinian.

Tinian, which is allowed to have five casinos and relies heavily on Chinese tourists, has only one operating casino since 1998, the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Besides Bridge Investment, the other two investors are the Marianas Resort Development Corp., which plans to build Matua Bay Resort, and Neo Gold Wings Paradise Saipan Corp.

CALVO SENTENCING UPDATE:

Chief Probation Officer asks OAG to look into her alleged violation

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Chief Probation Officer Ursula I. Lifoifoi Aldan has asked the Office of the Attorney General to investigate whether she committed a conflict of interest violation by concurring with her staff's pre-sentence investigation report on convicted sex offender Patrick Mendiola Calvo.

In a Wednesday letter to assistant attorney general Brian Gallagher, Aldan said the Office of Adult Probation, like any other appointed official, is bound by a code of ethics that includes not participating in a case where there is any conflict.

"This is a principle which this office has a high degree of respectf and is dutifully followed," said Aldan in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* on Friday.

By the same token of accountability and liability, she said, all authors of probation court reports are trained writers in their respective fields and held to a high standard of professionalism.

"The Office of the Adult Probation is a professional law enforcement office. Any impropriety or conflict of interest violation thereof must be reported to the Office of the Attorney General for investigation and prosecution," she said.

On Tuesday Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Naraja again postponed Calvo's sentencing after Calvo's counsel, G. Anthony Long, moved to strike the entire pre-sentence investigation prepared by CNMI Adult Probation Officer Simram Simram.

Long asserted that under the law, Aldan should have recused herself from the pre-sentence investigation report because she has a conflict of interest—her family being a competitor of Calvo's business. Instead, Long said, Aldan concurred with the report.

In response, Naraja ordered the CNMI Office of Adult Probation to prepare a new pre-sentence investigation report on Calvo and directed it to secure the aid of the U.S. Probation Office when writing the report.

Simram had testified Tuesday that he submitted his report to Aldan as part of standard procedures and that Aldan only changed some grammatical errors in his report.

In her letter to Gallagher, Aldan explained that her concurrence with Simram's report was necessary in order to make it an official probation court report.

She said the concurrence is a determinant factor that a report has been screened by a supervisor and had passed for accuracy and objectivity.

She said the author's sentencing recommendations to the court are only recommendations and falls within the penalties provided for by the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Aldan said the judge has the ultimate discretion in Calvo's sentencing upon considering the arguments of the OAG, defense counsel, and the report of the Office of Adult Probation.

The sentencing of the 47-year-old Calvo was originally set for Nov. 30, 2009. It was moved for Monday, Dec. 7, at 10am. Before Dec. 7, Naraja re-set the sentencing for Jan. 12 as the court was then awaiting additional information from the Probation Office.

The businessman has been under house arrest while awaiting his sentencing.

Last September, jurors found Calvo guilty of sexually abusing a 13-year-old girl in 2008.

House, Senate counsels reassigned

Legislative Bureau Director Glenna SP. Reyes reassigned the legal counsels for the 17th House of Representatives and the 17th Senate on Thursday.

The House has 20 lawmakers, while the Senate has nine. However, both chambers now have only two counsels each.

In a Jan. 14 memorandum, Reyes said the Legislative Bureau "is in the process of hiring a third legal counsel to assist the House members."

"These assignments will be effective immediately until such time that the Legislative Bureau hires a third counsel and permanent assignments are distributed to the members," Reyes said in a memo to House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan).

Reyes reassigned former Senate legal counsel Antonio S. Cabrera to the House, where he now joins legal counsel Joey P. San Nicolas.

Former House legal counsel Antonette Vilagomez was re-assigned to the Senate. She now joins legal counsel Ian Catlett, who started working as Senate counsel effective Sept. 16, 2009, after coming back to the CNMI.

In the House, San Nicolas's assignments include assisting the committees on Federal and Foreign Relations; Judiciary and Governmental Operations; Natural Resources; and the House leadership.

Cabrera's assignments include assisting the House committees on Ways and Means; Health, Education and Welfare; Commerce and Tourism, Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications; and the House minority.

In a separate Jan. 14 memo, Reyes said Catlett is assisting five Senate committees while Villagomez is assigned to five Senate committees. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

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H1N1 VACCINE SCHOOL VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

DPH WILL BE BACK AT THE SCHOOLS TO ADMINISTER THE 2ND DOSE OF THE H1N1 VACCINE TO STUDENTS 9 YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER

Students and school staff who want to receive their H1N1 vaccine for the first time can also get in line!

Consent forms are available at the school office. Turn in signed consent forms back to school before your vaccination date!

SCHOOL VACCINATION SCHEDULE

January 20th – Wednesday
Dandan Head Start
San Antonio Head Start
WSR Head Start

January 21st – Thursday
Kagman Head Start
Oleai Head Start

January 22nd – Friday
Garapan Head Start
Tanapag Head Start

January 27th – Wednesday
Kagman Elementary School
Garapan Elementary School

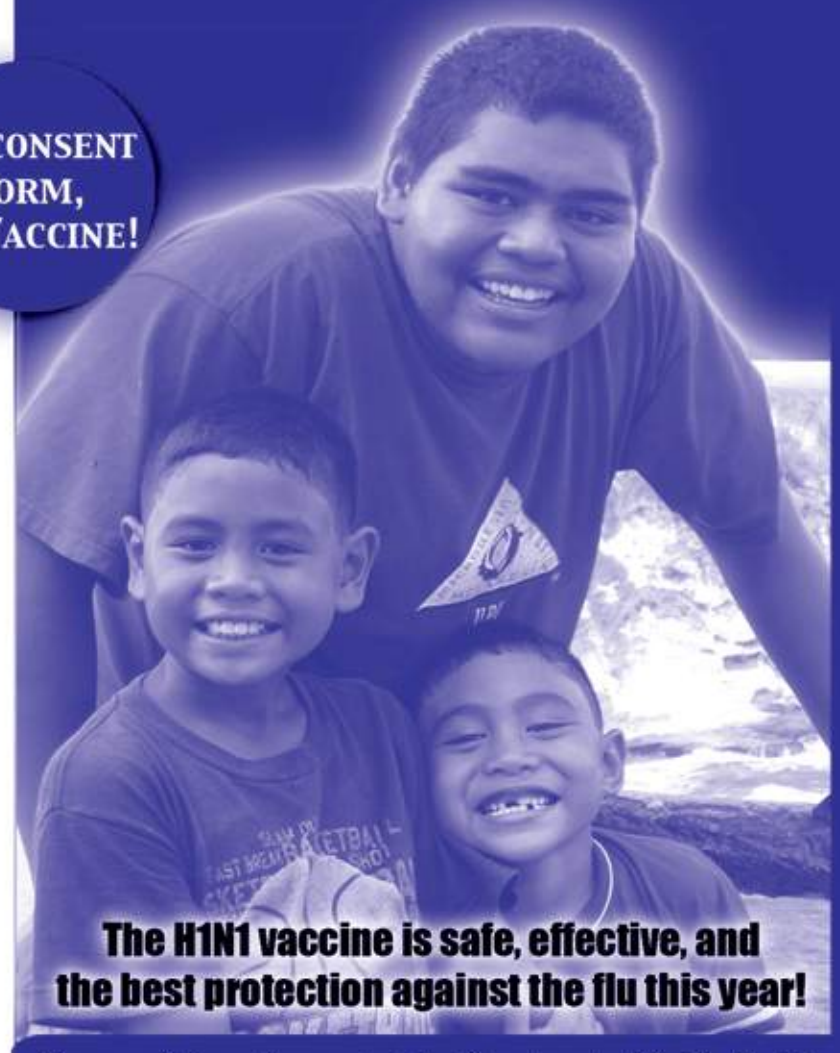
January 28th – Thursday
Dandan Elementary School
Oleai Elementary School
San Vicente Elementary School

January 29th – Friday
Koblerville Elementary School
San Antonio Elementary School
WSR Elementary School

Rota, Tinian, and Private School Schedules are being finalized

Visit any health clinic to get vaccinated.

NO CONSENT FORM, NO VACCINE!



The H1N1 vaccine is safe, effective, and the best protection against the flu this year!

For more information, contact the Department of Public Health at 234-8950 or email fluwatchcnmi@gmail.com.

CDC

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PSS RFP 10-001

"AUDIT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR FISCAL YEARS 2010, 2011 AND 2012"

The CNMI Public School System (PSS) is required by law to have an external audit every fiscal year. This audit is subject to the requirements of the Single Audit Act. The Public Auditor is ultimately responsible for the conduct of external audits pursuant to Public Law 3-91. PSS is an autonomous government agency, and its audit is independent of any audit of the CNMI government.

The Public School System and the Office of the Public Auditor are soliciting competitive sealed proposals from certified public accounting (CPA) firms to conduct single audits for fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012. Beginning January 12, 2010 the single audit proposal package may be obtained from the PSS Procurement & Supply Office situated on the 3rd floor of the CNMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All Proposals, an original and five copies, shall be sealed in an envelope marked "PSS RFP 09-043 Audit of the Public School System" and submitted to the PSS Procurement & Supply Office in the CNM Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than 10 AM February 4, 2010. Any proposal received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Questions pertaining to this RFP may be directed to Ms. Lori A. Grizzard, Acting Director of Finance at 237.3045, or faxed to 664.3750, not later than January 29, 2010.

/s/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/s/ Robert Florian
P&S Officer

/s/ Michael Pai, CPA
Public Auditor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
PROMOTIONAL & OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School System (PSS), Human Resources Office shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Public Law 6 - 10, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, handicap or place of origin. Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Announcement No: **PSS-072-2006** Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (Amendment / Re-Announcement VI)**
Pay Level/Step: **UNGRADED** Per Annum Salary: **$50,000.00 - $65,000.00**
Opening Date: **January 5, 2010** Closing Date: **January 20, 2010**
Location: **PSS – OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays
Minimum Requirements:
Graduation from a U.S. accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Finance, and Accounting, or related field of study, plus five (5) years work experience and can either hold a valid licensure as a Certified Public Accountant; OR MA degree in Business Administration, Finance, and Accounting or related field of study, plus five (5) years related work experience, including three (3) years in Public auditing or Government auditing experience.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd FLOOR RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE; (2) TRANSCRIPTS; (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX0 MONTHS); (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER; (5) RESUME; AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

MVA cites Tourism Industry Excellence awardees

Remy Rebellon receives a plaque from the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors as he is named Individual Volunteer of the Year at the first ever Tourism Industry Excellence Awards, presented by the MVA at their general membership meeting on Jan. 14, 2010, at Saipan World Resort.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Northern Marianas named recipients of the first ever Tourism Industry Excellence Awards on Thursday, Jan. 14, at the Marianas Visitors Authority general membership meeting at the Saipan World Resort.

The Fiscal Year 2009 winners were: 2008 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle (Most Outstanding Tourism Attraction), Saipan Laolao Development (Most Outstanding Destination Enhancement), Russian Market Manager Manager Elitza Stoilova of Pacific Islands Club Saipan (Employee of the Year), Remy P. Rebellon (Individual Volunteer of the Year), and Team PDI (Group/Organization Volunteer of the Year).

This year marks the first time MVA members have been invited to recognize fellow tourism industry individuals, events, and projects for the tourism awards, which will now be an annual event.

Each of the winners made substantial contributions to tourism during the year. The December 2008 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle had 93 participants and garnered international publicity for the Northern Marianas in various publications. The Laolao Bay project by Kumho Asiana Group began construction of a 54-room twin tower project worth over $54-million. Stoilova has served as chairwoman of the MVA Russian Ad Hoc Committee and has been instrumental in developing this growth market over the years. Rebellon is the assistant manager of Housekeeping/Housing at Fiesta Resort & Spa and volunteered for numerous tourism-related events including Taste of the Marianas, XTERRA, and Beautify CNMI cleanups. Non-profit organization TEAM PDI founded and/or spearheaded numerous partnerships with private, public and NGO entities in various tourism promotion projects.

"We sincerely appreciate the efforts and partnership of each individual and organization helping to strengthen Northern Marianas tourism," said MVA managing firector Perry Tenorio. "The Tourism Industry Excellence Awards are our way of publicly recognizing and thanking those who have made extraordinary contributions in support of the industry, and we look forward to making this recognition annually."

Tenorio said MVA also hopes to receive nominations for the Tourism Promotion/Campaign of the Year and Most Outstanding Personal Contribution categories in 2010. ***(MVA)***

Non-profit organization Team PDI was named Group/Organization Volunteer of the Year at the Tourism Industry Excellence Awards presented by the Marianas Visitors Authority on Jan. 14, 2010, at Saipan World Resort. The MVA board of directors and managing director presented the award, which was selected from among nominations made by MVA members.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Store's surveillance camera helps identify two suspected shoplifters

A store's surveillance camera reportedly led to the identification of two men who stole seven bottles of perfume and a purse in November.

Detectives identified the suspects as Raymond Naputi Muna, 40, and Julian Muna Sablan, 21. Police arrested Naputi last week for theft. Sablan was arrested on Jan. 7 on a separate case.

Detective Jesse Stole stated in his report that Police Officer Jesse Seman responded to En Cool Phone Shop in San Antonio on Nov. 10 after receiving a call that a theft incident.

The store's owner showed Seman the surveillance footage of the theft that occurred the day before, Nov. 9. Seman allegedly identified one of the individuals in the footage as Raymond Muña. Stole said he also responded to the store and identified three individuals—Raymond Muña, Sablan, and Vicente SN Muña.

Stole said the footage showed that the three entered En Cool Phone Shop and, as Sablan and Vicente Muña were talking to the owner, Raymond Muña went to the far counter where he took some bottles of perfume. Raymond Muña allegedly took a Sting Ray bag, put all the items inside his shirt and under his armpit, then left the shop. Sablan also allegedly walked to the same counter and took one perfume bottle and placed it inside his pocket. He and Vicente Muña then left the store.

The owner estimated the total value of the stolen items as $540.

During an interview last Jan. 7, Vicente Muña allegedly admitted that he, Raymond Muña and Sablan indeed went to En Cool Phone Shop to look for a charger for his phone.

It was not clear whether police included Vicente Muña as a suspect since the arrest warrant named only Raymond Muña and Sablan. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

ARC releases $10M to Help Haiti

The American Red Cross is releasing an additional $9 million for earthquake relief in Haiti, bringing its total commitment so far to $10 million.

Priority needs in Haiti are food, water, temporary shelter, medical services and emotional support. American Red Cross Disaster management specialists are scheduled to arrive today from the United States, Peru, and Mexico to join local Red Cross staff already on the ground in the disaster zone.As soon as airports begin accepting relief shipments, tarps, hygiene items and cooking sets for approximately 5,000 families will come from the Red Cross warehouse in Panama.

The American Red Cross is also helping the injured who may need blood. Blood and blood products were shipped to the U.S. Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida, and then on to Guantanamo Bay in support of medical evacuees from Haiti.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has a plane full of mostly medical items on the way to Haiti from Geneva. ICRC staff, including engineers, a surgeon and family linking specialists are expected to arrive in Port-au-Prince this morning. Other Red Cross partners have deployed a mobile hospital, medical teams, and 40 staff to help with sheltering, providing water, sanitation, and telecommunications. ***(PR)***

HOW TO HELP

We are not accepting volunteers to travel to Haiti. If you would like to volunteer for the American Red Cross, please contact the NMI Chapterhttp://www.redcross.org/where.

For inquiries about relatives living and who have citizenship in Haiti, please be patient and call repeatedly until the lines clear or contact other family members who live nearby. Telephone, Internet and other communication lines are often disrupted in times of disaster.

People trying to locate U.S. citizens living or traveling in Haiti should contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Citizens Services, at 1-888-407-4747 or (202) 647-5225.

Countless requests have come from people wanting to help. The best way to do that is to make a donation to the American Red Cross International Response Fund at redcross.org or by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS. Donors can designate their gifts to Haiti relief. Donations to the International Response Fund allows the American Red Cross to respond to global emergencies and disasters.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Statewide Independent Living Council
"Yes I Can!"
P.O. BOX 501521, SAIPAN, MP 95950: TEL: (670) 322-6538 FAX: (670) 322-6536
TTY: (670) 322-6449; E-MAIL: VOC.REHAB@SAIPAN.COM

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910, the public is advised that the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its FY 2010 1st General Membership Meeting on Friday January 29, 2010 at the Chamolinian Room at 9:00am-2:00pm. Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

I. Roll Call
II. Adoption of Agenda
III. Adoption of 09-03-09 Minutes
IV. Reports
- Chair
- OVR Director
- CLI Director

V. Old Business
- ARRA Funds

VI. New Business
- Resource Plan
- Election of Officers

VII. Miscellaneous
VIII. Announcements
IX. Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters, are asked to call 322-6537(voice) or 322-6449(TTY). Please contact Magin Iginoef (Council Liaison) two days in advanced for necessary arrangements.

/s/ Kaye Christian
SILC Chairperson

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, January 22, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room, Second Floor, Captain George F. Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan, Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes (December 23, 2009)

II. CORRESPONDENCES
III. COMMITTEE REPORTS
1. Financial Affairs Committee
2. Airport Facilities Committee
3. Seaport Facilities Committee
4. Personnel Affairs Committee

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
V. OLD BUSINESS
1. Adoption of Fiscal Year 2008 Audit Report
2. Draft Fiscal Year 2010 Budget

VI. NEW BUSINESS
3. Ginen Saipan proposal
4. Grazing Permits
5. Saipan Industrial Gas Extension
6. Airport and Seaport Parking Booths
   a. Cost Analysis
   b. Grace Period
7. Five-year Master Plan (Consultant)
8. Procurement of Ports Police vehicle
9. Authorized Bank Signatories
10. Communications (Correspondences)
11. Personnel Matter: Contract Renewals and Vacancy Announcements
12. Supplemental Budget request

VII. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS
VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT
IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION
X. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items.

JOSE R. LIFOIFOI **January 18, 2010**
Chairman, Board of Directors

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Book discussion series starts tonight

Visiting author Dr. P.F. Kluge will start a monthlong lecture series on four classic American novels at 6pm this evening at the American Memorial Park Theater.

The series will kick off with Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1961. Participants will spend three 90-minute sessions exploring this novel before moving on to the next title.

ON THE NET
■ www.nmihumanities.org

Other books to be discussed over the course of the program include *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Things They Carried*.

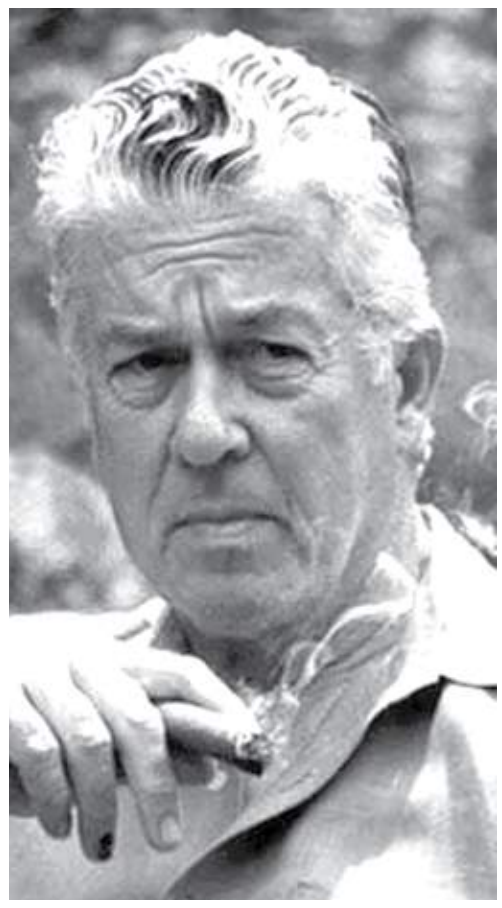
Kluge will examine these books on three levels—what they say, how they say it, and how their themes relate to contemporary life in the Commonwealth. Ample time will be reserved for questions and answers.

The program is sponsored by the NMI Council for the Humanities under a "We the People" grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Kluge is writer-in-residence at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and has written several critically acclaimed novels including *Gone Tomorrow* and *Eddie and the Cruisers*. Before beginning his academic career, Kluge spent two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer on Saipan in the late 1960s.

The Council will videotape each lecture and copies will be provided to Tinian and Rota so that interested individuals on those islands may participate in the discussion series. The series will also be aired on cable television.

A program schedule is available on the council's Web site at www.nmihumanities.org. Participants are invited to pick up their books at the council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. ***(PR)***



Dr. P.F. Kluge

Konflikt MMA brand highlighted in online publication

The Saipan-based MMA clothing company, Konflikt, was recently named one of the "Top Five MMA Clothing Brands You Don't Know but Should" in the online *Bleacher Report*. The *Bleacher Report* is the world's largest sports network that is powered entirely by fan-generated content.

"It is an honor to be recognized by the *Bleacher Report* for my designs," said creative director Norman Del Rosario. "The power of the Internet allows people from all over the world to see our designs and wear the Konflikt brand."

Nick Colon, senior analyst for the *Bleacher Report* had this to say about Konflikt:

"Konflikt MMA is a brand that many MMA clothing fans, and simply clothing fans in general, should take a long, hard look at in the short-term future. This company's brand is exceptional, with popular designs such as fleur-de-lis's and a quite brutally good-looking font of text.

Its owner Norman Del Rosario has done a masterful job with limited resources on an island in Saipan, and imagine what he could do with more time and money. This brand is one that fighters should seriously look into, as some already have. The likes of Mark Munoz, Junie Browning, and Philippe Nover have all tried Del Rosario's branding, and they don't seem too disappointed.

ON THE NET
■ www.konfliktmma.net

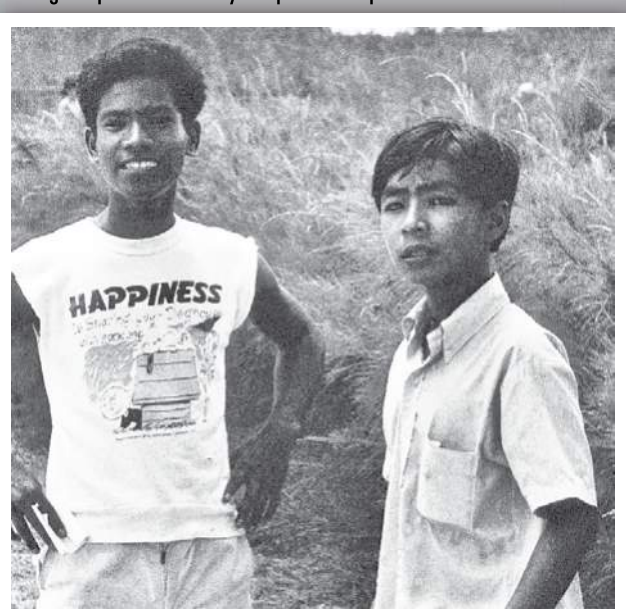
Since blasting onto the MMA clothing scene six months ago, Konflikt immediately caught the eye of off-island MMA fighters and their fans. But the Konflikt brand will never forgets its Saipan roots. "I was designing shirts for many people on Saipan, and some suggested creating my own local brand, and Konflikt was born. While I am now working with fighters from all over the world, my inspiration is to bring recognition to Saipan and the CNMI," he said

Konflikt has recently launched a line of ladies apparel and new designs are constantly being added to the line. Fight shorts, gloves and other accessories are coming in the near future and Konflikt will continue to listen to their customers about what they want to see next from the brand. The full line of Konflikt MMA Clothing is available exclusively at the 670 Rock Steady Shop in Gualo Rai.

Del Rosario said that Konflikt MMA Clothing aims to create authentic, high quality products for the top mixed martial artists in the world. For more information about Konflikt MMA Clothing, visit www.konfliktmma.net. ***(PR)***

Can you identify

THE NMI Council for the Humanities, in collaboration with the *Saipan Tribune*, is running a series of photographs in this section every Tuesday and is inviting the public to identify the persons or places featured in this section.



If you can identify the persons or places in the picture, please contact the NMI Council for the Humanities by telephone (235-4785), via e-mail (photo@nmihumanities.org) or by visiting the Council's office located in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. These images are from the Council's Historic Photograph Database, which is currently being developed to help document the history and cultures of the CNMI.

The persons featured in last week's photo have been identified as follows: From left, nurses Rosa Blanco Camacho, Ellene Litulumar Teregeyo, unidentified, and Martha Diaz Muna Mendiola at the U.S. Naval Hospital on Maturana Hill in the late 1940s. Identified by Joseph Mendiola, Nick Muna, S. Teregeyo and Diego C. Camacho.

Training exercises today on FDM

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct live-fire and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla today, Jan. 19, from 11:15am to 3:30pm and Jan. 20-22, from 8am.to 3pm.

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The public, especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and dates indicated.

Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 19, 1999

Legislators want U.S.-CNMI 'misunderstanding' resolved

Legislative leaders yesterday expressed optimism on the resumption of consultation talks between the CNMI and the United States aimed to iron out differences that have soured bilateral relations, saying they will raise strong opposition against a federal takeover. While their meeting with Edward B. Cohen, President Clinton's special representative to the 902 talks, will be informal, key members of the CNMI Legislature said it served as an opportunity to exchange views on issues affecting relations with Washington. Contentious topics on local labor and immigration will inevitably be brought up in the discussion when Cohen meets with lawmakers on Thursday on Tinian as part of his four-day visit on the island to resume the talks provided under Section 902 of the Covenant.

Chinese group scouting for investments

A group of Chinese businessmen from Hong Kong will be arriving today to explore investment opportunities in the Northern Marianas, according to Dave M. Sablan, board chairman of the Marianas Visitors Authority. Sablan has informed Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio that the 21-member delegation of the Asian Chinese Association will stay here until Thursday where they will also meet with local officials and visit the various tourism sites. The group of visiting businessmen who are involved in plastic manufacturing, trading and pharmaceutical may decide to set up their businesses here when the CNMI's Free Trade Zone has been established, he added.

Jan. 19, 2000

Senate pushes new AG nominee

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio is likely to submit to the Senate his nomination for a new Attorney General in the next few days apparently bowing to pressure from members disgruntled over his current appointee. The chief executive met yesterday with leaders of both houses of Legislature in which they discussed wide range of issues, including appointment of permanent Attorney General to replace Maya B. Kara who has held the position in acting capacity for the last 18 months. Mr. Tenorio declined to provide details of what transpired in the discussion, but sources privy to the talks said a new name will be submitted to the Senate Committee on Executive Appointment and Government Investigations "within the next few days."

'Cancellation of project sends dangerous message'

Lawmakers yesterday vowed to press their investigation into the controversial decision by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to abandon the 80-megawatt power plant for Saipan as they expressed concerns on the island's economic future. Leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives discussed in joint meeting the proposed oversight hearing, although specific plans are expected to be tackled in upcoming meetings within the next few weeks. Senate President Paul A. Manglona said that while the governor is open to meeting with CUC officials and members of the Legislature on the issue, they need to address fears on potential power shortage and impact of the decision to scrap the project to the investment climate here.

Jan. 19, 2001

McPhetres bares plan to run for DC Rep post

Former Northern Marianas College president Agnes McPhetres yesterday disclosed plan to run for CNMI Representative to Washington in the coming November elections. She is seeking the endorsement of the Democratic Party as the official candidate for the post. Armed with her long years of experience as an educator, Ms. McPhetres said she believes she will be able to efficiently carry out her job as an effective lobbyist for the Northern Marianas. "In order for us to be effective and to be heard by Washington, we have to know how to negotiate," she added. Ms. McPhetres retired as President of the College in December 1999 after 18 years of service in the highest learning institution on the island. The NMC Board of Regents has named her President Emeritus in recognition of the work she has accomplished for NMC.

Island Snapshots

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy 9th birthday to our loving son Joseph Jewel Kisa! Wishing you good health, happiness, and more birthdays to come! Lots of love from your Dad, Mom, and brother Joshua.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday to Julie de la Rosa who's turning 38 today, Jan. 19! We wish you many blessings on your special day and years to come! With love and care, Ray, Jerry Boy, Jiana, Kierstin, David Peter, Tzarina and Thaddeus.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

VOICES OF DEMOCRACY

From left, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3457's Norbert Diaz, Marianas High School principal Karen Borja, Physical Science students, MHS Teacher of the Year and VFW teacher essay winner Maria Ornes, and Larry Guerrero, commander and chairman of the "Voice of Democracy" essay contest. The VFW Post 3457 presented certificates and checks to MHS principal Borja and MHS Teacher of the Year Ornes for winning the overall high school "Voice of Democracy" essay contest.

JOVAN I.FRED

PUBLIC HEARING

A large number of Saipan residents and officials listen to the presentations during the public hearing on the military buildup's draft Environmental Impact Statement at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on Friday night. Military officials led by Capt. Peter S. Lynch, commanding officer of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas, and Joint Guam Program Office executive director David Bice, attended the hearing.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

PMT DONATION

Pacific Micronesia Tour makes a donation to San Vicente Elementary School as education tax credit for calendar year 2009. PMT also made similar donation to Kagman High School, Marianas High School, Grace Christian's School, and Mount Carmel School. PMT donates ETC checks to different schools every year.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEW MAYOR

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, right, has his picture taken with newly sworn in Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz, second from right, and other Commonwealth officials on Friday, Jan. 15, 2010, after the mayor's inauguration on Tinian Island.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, right, pose with newly sworn in Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz after the inauguration ceremony held Friday, Jan. 15, 2010, on Tinian.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Safety police officers perform parade of color duties during Friday's inauguration ceremony for the new mayor of Tinian, Ramon M. Dela Cruz.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Google vs. China

Good for Google. The company's decision to stop censoring its Chinese search engine is more likely to mean the end of its China-based service than a breakdown of Beijing's political firewall. But more important than the question of whether Google.cn survives is the larger issue that Google has now raised for other Western companies and democratic governments—which is whether China's gross and growing abuse of the Internet should be quietly tolerated or actively resisted.

Google cited a major instance of that abuse in announcing its policy change: "a highly sophisticated and targeted attack" on Google and more than 20 other large companies aimed at stealing software code. "A primary goal of the attackers," Google said, was breaking into the Gmail accounts of Chinese human rights activists.

This is shocking but unsurprising. Cyber-attacks from China aimed at U.S. businesses, the Pentagon and other government agencies have become commonplace, if not epidemic, in recent years. So have Beijing's demands that Western companies collaborate in its efforts to censor political content on the Internet and snoop on the private e-mails of its citizens, several of whom have been prosecuted with e-mails supplied by Yahoo. China aims not just at eliminating the free speech and virtual free assembly inherent to the Internet but at turning it into a weapon that can be used against democrats and democratic societies.

Until now, Western companies and governments have mostly gone along with Beijing's policies—though U.S. computer manufacturers successfully resisted an attempt by China last year to require that censoring software be preinstalled on all new computers. Now Google has taken the admirable step of embracing open and public resistance. Skeptics point out that it was losing the search-market battle inside China to the domestic brand Baidu. But Google.cn still attracts tens of millions of Chinese users, who will have questions for their government if the company is driven out. U.S consumers, for their part, should want answers from companies such as Apple and Microsoft, which continue to kowtow to the Chinese censors. Internet activists say Microsoft censors Chinese language searches of Bing both in and outside of China; Apple has blocked Chinese from downloading applications related to the Dalai Lama.

Google's action also challenges the Obama administration, which has been slow to embrace the cause of Internet freedom. The restrictions the Chinese government imposes on Google and other firms ought to be a trade issue as well as a human rights issue; after all Beijing is making it impossible for Western companies to compete in an important part of its market. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton issued a statement Tuesday saying the Chinese government would be asked about the cyber-attacks reported by Google. But another question ought to be directed at her own department, which has sat on funding for Internet-freedom initiatives and denied support to the Global Internet Freedom Consortium, which says its software can circumvent China's firewall. Firewall-busting would allow the Chinese to continue accessing Google's uncensored searches whether or not the company retains a Chinese base. It ought to be a major part of the Internet initiative Ms. Clinton plans to announce this month.

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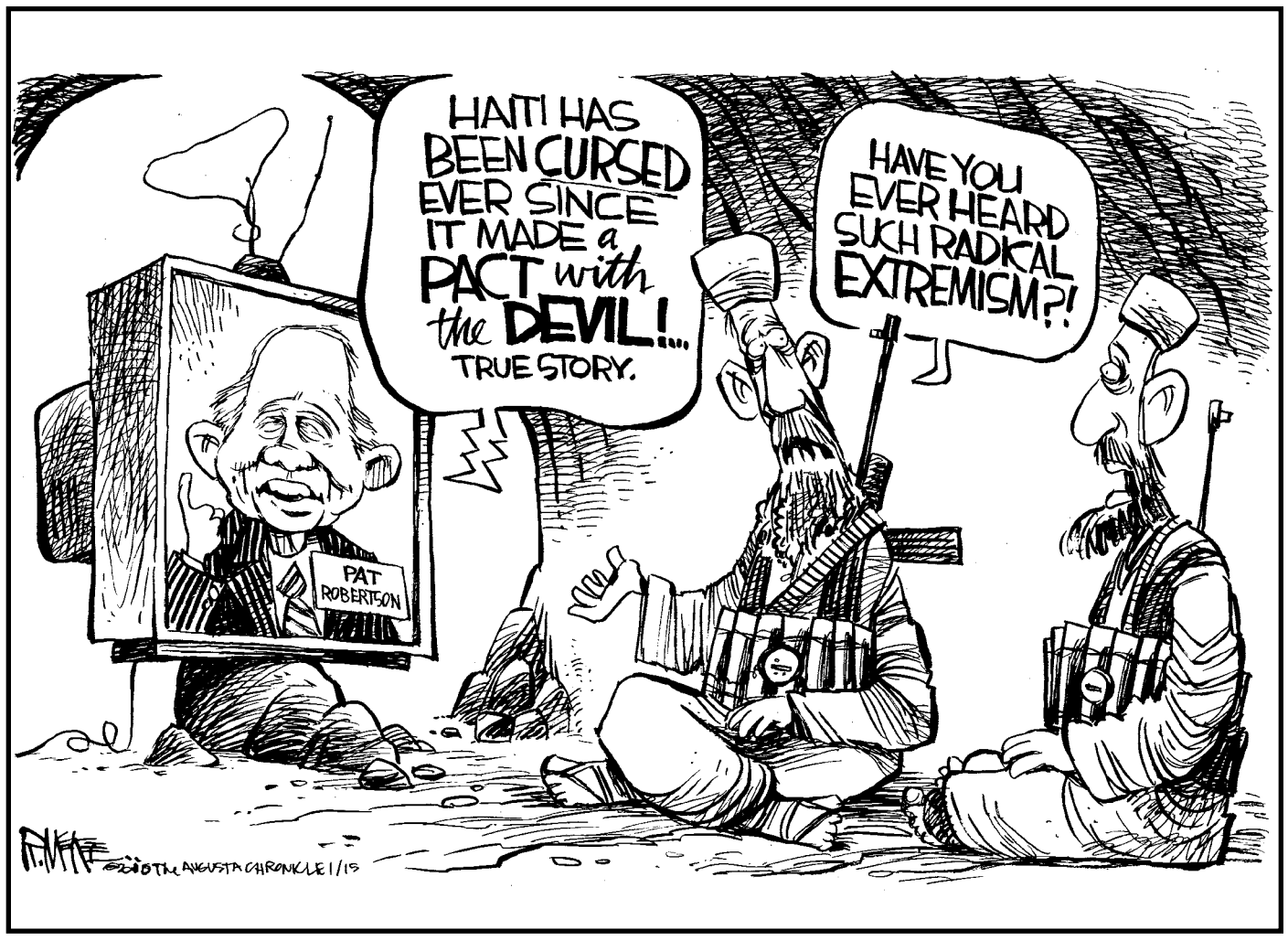
HAITI HAS BEEN CURSED EVER SINCE IT MADE a PACT with the DEVIL!... TRUE STORY.
PAT ROBERTSON
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD SUCH RADICAL EXTREMISM?!
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The sorry state of 2010

By KEVIN HUFFMAN
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Only two weeks into January and 2010 is shaping up as the Year of the Apology. All around us, public figures are falling on their swords: Harry Reid, Mark McGwire, Gilbert Arenas. Even Lloyd Blankfein admitted remorse (sort of).

Public apologies date to Plato's time but have assumed a larger perch in society today. Paul Slansky, author of "My Bad: The Apology Anthology," says that the apology has become a mandatory public ritual. "It allows people to resume their place in society without any real penalty paid. It's the mini-version of going into rehab."

Anyone who's ever had to apologize—basically, all of us—knows that there are a few requisite elements to atonement: sincerity, timeliness and clarity. Somehow, though, our leaders and stars still struggle to pull it off. The apology has become the moment that defines a public downfall or scandal. Done well, a public admission of wrongdoing can be the first step toward redemption. Done wrong—Mark Sanford, anyone?—and it's all downhill.

Here are my grades for this year's most prominent I'm sorry's:

■ Harry Reid. Grade: A-minus. Category: The Unequivocal.

The Senate majority leader made a solid effort in his mea culpa for his insensitive remarks about President Barack Obama. He said, "I deeply regret using such a poor choice of words. I sincerely apologize for offending any and all Americans, especially African Americans, for my improper comments." He has the right form—admit what you did was wrong; apologize to the person you offended, immediately; and then shut up. Slight downgrade for the "choice of words" hedge; no choice of words could have cleaned up that idea.

■ Rod Blagojevich. Grade: B-plus. Category: The Master of the Obvious.

Sometimes people say or do something so dumb that all it takes is the remark or action being pointed out. After *Esquire* magazine published the former Illinois governor's comments that he is "blacker than Barack Obama," Blagojevich backtracked. Quickly. "It was a very stupid thing to say. Obviously I'm not blacker than President Obama." Thanks for clearing that up.

■ Mark McGwire. Grade: C. Category: The Caveat.

McGwire miserably failed on timeliness but finally came clean about using steroids during his record-breaking baseball career in several emotional interviews this week. "I wish I had never touched steroids," he said. "It was foolish and it was a mistake. I truly apologize." Unfortunately, McGwire couldn't resist adding context—that he only used the substances to recover from injuries, he played in "the steroid era," etc. The prototype here is Bill Clinton's Monica Lewinsky apology—i.e., I apologize for my behavior. Now let me remind you that I was unfairly persecuted. Readers should note that The Caveat often results in additional apologies in an effort to upgrade to The Unequivocal. In other words, be on the lookout for McGwire Round Two.

■ Lloyd Blankfein. Grade: D-minus. Category: The "I'm Sorry If You Were Hurt."

The chief executive of Goldman Sachs appeared before the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission on Tuesday to answer questions about Goldman selling the very investments that it was internally betting against. "I do think the behavior is improper. We regret the consequence that people have lost money in it," he said. This is a favorite tack—taking on a tiny bit of blame, implying that it could have happened to anyone, but sloughing most of the responsibility onto the offended parties. Examples of this abound, but Justin Timberlake's post-Super Bowl apology ("I am sorry if anyone was offended by the wardrobe malfunction") remains the standard-bearer.

■ Gilbert Arenas. Grade: F. Category: The Insincere.

After it emerged that Arenas had brought guns into the Washington Wizards locker room, his apology got off to a good start. "I am very sorry for the effect that my serious lapse in judgment has had. ... I want to apologize to everybody for letting them down with my conduct, and I promise to do better in the future." This apology requires a modicum of follow-through, though, and Arenas' behavior the next day, laughing while pretending to shoot his teammates at an away game, earn him a failing grade (and an indefinite suspension, along with felony charges). Marion Barry is the true exemplar of this category. Last year, a few days before he was charged with stalking his ex-girlfriend, Barry wrote to her: "In an effort to resolve this situation in an amicable manner, I sincerely apologize to you." Only a true artiste can cite sincerity in such an insincere way.

The ritual of the public apology is critical mainly because Americans are so forgiving. Contrition is the price we ask our public figures to pay, and the reward is a remarkable degree of absolution. That's a good thing for people such as McGwire, who will probably adjust his apology and reap the benefits of forgiveness in time for spring training. Ideally, of course, our public figures would have less to apologize for in the first place.

The writer won The Post's America's Next Great Pundit contest.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

People are asking

IMMIGRATION FORUM

By MAYA KARA and BRUCE MAILMAN
Special to the *Saipan Tribune*

Maya Kara is a native of Hungary and comes to the practice of law by way of her interest in Asian history. Bruce Mailman is a native of Bakersfield, California and was a private investigator in California prior to becoming a lawyer. Both have lived and practiced law in the CNMI for over 20 years, Maya in government service and Bruce in private practice. They are married and are partners in the law firm of Mailman & Kara, LLC in Garapan, Saipan.

Over the last several months we have seen hundreds of people with questions about immigration. The kinds of questions we get reflect the issues that are most prevalent in the community at any given time. For example, in the month prior to Nov. 28, the vast majority of inquiries had to do with preserving CNMI status and umbrella permits. In the month after that, the inquiries were almost exclusively about the availability of different kinds of parole for holiday and business travel. In the last few weeks, we have had a lot of inquiries from employers regarding the availability of various types of U.S. visas for managers and executives. We are also starting to get concerns about report back dates on umbrella permits.

So rather than focusing on a single issue, we will look at some representative questions actually received by us, and answer them briefly. We know there are many people out there with the same or similar issues.

Q: I am a contract worker from the Philippines. I have worked in the CNMI for over 25 years. I have an umbrella permit and my contract expires in six months. I am afraid that I won't be renewed. I was formerly married to a U.S. citizen but we were divorced four years ago. I have a 17-year-old son who was born in the CNMI. How can I get a green card?

A: The short answer is you can't at this time. Your prior marriage to a U.S. citizen does not help you. You were eligible to apply for a green card while you were married, but not after. The only exceptions to this are for abused spouses and surviving spouses, but even they have to apply within two years after the termination of the marriage or the death of the U.S. citizen spouse. Once your son reaches 21 years of age, he can petition for you for a green card. That is four years away. So your strategy needs to focus on how to get through the next four years without disrupting your life. If you think that you will not be renewed by your current employer, start looking for another one right away. Your umbrella permit allows you to either remain with your current employer or contract with a new one all the way up to Nov. 27, 2011. If your contract expires and you do not yet have a new employer, go down to DOL, register with Employment Services and get an extension of time to find employment. You can probably do this several times. If you still cannot find a job, you will probably have to go back to your home country to wait out the time until your son becomes 21. If you do find a new employer, you still need to plan what to do after Nov. 27, 2011, when the umbrella permit expires. U.S. immigration law does not recognize or honor any CNMI immigration status after that date. Your best bet is probably to obtain CNMI-CW status, but your employer will have to petition for you. The regulations are not yet final for that program, and until they are, CW will not be available. We estimate that the CW program will be up and running within the next 30 to 90 days.

Q: I have been a missionary in the CNMI for 15 years. My 240M permit is about to expire. I do have an umbrella permit. What can I do to continue my mission?

A: Unfortunately, the missionary permit category was eliminated as of Oct. 1, 2008; it cannot be renewed. So you will need to convert to another category. It is fortunate that you have an umbrella permit because that allows you to convert to any legitimate permit category for which you are eligible. If you are the minister in charge of your congregation you could convert to a 240L Minister of Religion permit. Since you are not the minister in charge, however, you will need to convert to a 240K Foreign National Worker category. Please realize that in doing this, your employer (i.e. church or religious organization) will need to comply with all the requirements regarding foreign national workers: JVA, local preference in hiring, paying the minimum wage ($4.55 per hour), and taking responsibility for your medical costs and repatriation. If your employer is not willing to undertake these responsibilities, you will not be able to go this route. You may also be eligible for a U.S. nonimmigrant R-1 visa for religious workers. The requirements for that are beyond the scope of today's column.

Q: I am a citizen of the Philippines and I entered the CNMI as a tourist in October. I extended my permit prior to Nov. 28 but it will expire very soon. My adult children live and work on Saipan and I am here to help my daughter who has just given birth. What can I do to stay?

A: I am sorry, but you need to go home. Even if you were eligible for another CNMI category, your tourist status is not convertible even if you had an umbrella permit, which you don't. Even if one of your children were to become a U.S. permanent resident by marrying a U.S. citizen, you would need to wait until she became a U.S. citizen—a minimum of three years after becoming a permanent resident—before she could petition for a green card for you. So, even if your daughter were to marry a U.S. citizen today and immediately apply for a green card, you would still be looking at a wait of around four years before she could apply for you, and that assumes everything goes forward without any problems or delays. A better plan for you would be to return to the Philippines, apply for a B1/B2 visitor's visa, and then visit your children and grandchildren on Saipan. A B1/B2 visa may be issued for 10 years, and allow you multiple entries. The length of time for each visit will be determined by the issuing officer based on the purpose of the visit, but it may be as long as six months at a time.

Q: I am a local U.S. citizen and I have been married to a Palauan lady for over 30 years. Can I get her a green card?

A: Of course you can, but do you need to? Your wife is of course eligible to apply for a green card based on her marriage to you. Due to the length of your marriage, she would get a 10-year green card, and, as is the case with anyone whose permanent residence is based on marriage, she would be eligible to apply for naturalization as a US citizen after three years. However, as a citizen of the Republic of Palau, she already can freely travel to, and live and work, anywhere in the U.S. and its territories. That, of course, includes the CNMI. She can travel anywhere else in the world on her Palauan passport. So there may not be any advantage in getting her a green card. It is quite a bit of money you may not need to spend.

That being said, there are some situations in which a citizen of any of the Freely Associated States (Palau, Marshalls, FSM) would want to apply for a green card. We had a case in which an FSM citizen, who has lived in the CNMI for many years, has been married to a citizen of the Philippines for a dozen years. As a Philippine citizen, she could not share his FAS status in the U.S. immigration system. He has adult U.S. citizen children from a former marriage, but at the time of our clients' marriage the children were over 18, too old to qualify as the wife's stepchildren for immigration purposes. What to do? We suggested that one of the FAS husband's adult U.S. citizen children petition for him to become a U.S. permanent resident, with his Filipino wife accompanying as a derivative beneficiary of the petition. This strategy worked beautifully, and both are now U.S. permanent residents living peacefully in the CNMI—and it is a good reminder that everyone's situation is unique.

The information contained in this column is intended as general information only, and not as individual legal advice. Readers should obtain professional legal advice before taking action with respect to their individual situations. Readers may submit questions regarding federalization or immigration issues to the authors by email to lexmarianas@pticom.com. Readers may also e-mail written questions through the Saipan Tribune *at editor@saipantribune.com.*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

More time?

To the CNMI taxpayers and voters: How is it that an Attorney General who was appointed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial is now asking for more time on the "unauthorized" release of a federal inmate?

Did it ever occur to anyone that such a release resulted in the unlawful use of local government resources, to include manpower hours, at the expense of the taxpayers of the CNMI in order to relieve the governor's back problems? What was Fitial thinking of?

As in all other cases that I had publicly addressed, there had been excessive commutations, home furloughs vs. prison time in exchange for one's silence, coercions and so forth between Corrections officers in charge and the governor, yet investigations still end up zero or with no merit. Why?

Did anyone notice who escorted the federal inmate? Nope, it was not the U.S. Marshals or FBI but rather it was the governor's son-in law, Arnold Seman, the president of the governor's Indigenous Northern Marianas Descent on Self-government/ DoC Commissioner Dolores Sn. Aldan aka Dolores San Nicolas and her most trusted disciple, Capt. Georgia Cabrera; all others were just following orders.

A president of an organization who, along with the governor, challenged U.S. Public 110-229, a national security and border control issue taking over our local immigration.

Ask yourself the question, what might the governor's appointed Attorney General Edward Buckingham's defense of such unauthorized release? Especially when the federal government is currently securing our borders?

Finally, if U.S. District Attorney Eric O'Malley and Judge Munson are reading this, I ask them to have this case thoroughly investigated and leave no stones unturned, for Fitial and company have been quite busy defying federal authority.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
President, Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

Insular areas must be included in health reform

Editor's Note: U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) submitted the following update/op-ed as health reform legislation reaches the final stages of negotiation.

By GREGORIO KILILI C. SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

The U.S. Senate passed its version of health care insurance reform legislation on Christmas Eve. But there were no gifts for the Northern Mariana Islands and the other U.S. insular areas under the Christmas tree. The Senate bill did not have any of the consumer protections, the additional funding for Medicaid, or the option to participate in an insurance exchange that I and the other insular area members of Congress succeeded at getting into the health care bill the U.S. House of Representatives passed in July.

But we continue to fight to make sure that the benefits of affordable, accessible and high-quality health care reach our constituents. And we are not alone. Chairwoman Nydia Velázquez writing on behalf of the Hispanic Caucus, of which I am a member, told Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi that Senate proposals for the U.S. territories are "clearly unjust and clash with the goal of providing access to care for all Americans." The Congressional Black Caucus and Asian Pacific American Caucus hold the same view.

Leaders of the House and the Senate have been meeting with the President Obama at the White House daily—often late into the night—to craft a final bill that can pass in both the House and Senate. And last week Speaker Pelosi contacted me and assured me that my concern about fair treatment for the U.S. insular areas is being carefully considered.

The key provisions the House passed, which I want to see included in the final bill are:

■ Dramatically increased funding for Medicaid in the Northern Marianas, adding up to almost $209 million over the next ten years—four times more than we now receive.

■ Eligibility for consumer protections for our citizens. Insurance companies could only slightly limit coverage for preexisting conditions, and children's developmental health issues would be covered from birth.

■ An option for the governor to cover FAS citizens under Medicaid, if the governor determines that is in the best fiscal interest of the Commonwealth.

■ Finally, an option for the governor to expand access to health insurance by setting up an insurance exchange—as states will be required to do, with additional funding for the Northern Marianas to help individuals pay their insurance premiums. If an exchange would not work for the people of the Northern Marianas, the governor could instead add that money to Medicaid.

The expectation now is that the final bill, blending elements of the House and the Senate versions, will soon be ready for a vote. In the meantime, my colleagues Pedro Pierluisi of Puerto Rico, Donna Christensen of the Virgin Islands, Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa, and Madeleine Bordallo of Guam, and I continue to advocate for meaningful reform that includes Americans living in the insular areas. I know that, if we succeed, our citizens will have better health care, worthy of 21st century America.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲83° ▼75°	▲83° ▼74°	▲84° ▼74°	▲85° ▼75°

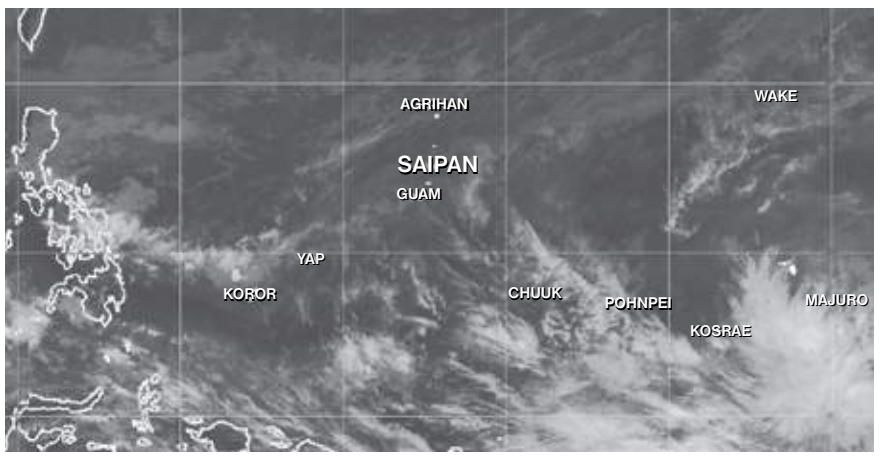
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲83	▼75
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼75
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲89	▼73
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼73
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲86	▼75
Majuro	Cloudy	▲84	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲76	▼65
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲43	▼19
Hong Kong	Showers	▲68	▼63
Honolulu	Sunny	▲80	▼69
London	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼42
Los Angeles	Rain	▲60	▼50
Manila	Rain	▲83	▼73
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲71	▼53
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲76	▼61
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼36
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲44	▼35
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲57	▼42
Rome	Cloudy	▲48	▼40
Salem	Rain	▲57	▼50
San Francisco	Rain	▲56	▼51
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼34
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲50	▼39
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲51	▼35

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line curves southwestward from 25N165E to the northernmost Mariana Islands at 20N145E to beyond 130E at 20N. Scattered showers are found along and up to 175 miles north of this boundary. Another shear line extends from northeast of 25N175E to north of Wake Island at about 22N168 and continues to just south of Guam at 13N145E to north of Yap and Koror, then shifts west-northwest at 8N135E to beyond 9N130E. Scattered showers are found along and up to 150 miles north of this boundary. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms within 50 miles of a line from 4N140E to 3N144E, south of Pohnpei between 3N and 5N from 158E to 162E, and south of Kwajelein and Majuro between the equator and 7N from 166E to 176E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:57 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
10:36 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
4:43 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
9:40 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:08 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:04 AM	9:15 PM
Wednesday	9:38 AM	10:01 PM
Thursday	10:12 AM	10:48 PM
Friday	10:49 AM	11:38 PM
Saturday	11:28 AM	

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 13, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	1,3,4,5,6,7 via NRT
NW638	8:00am	10:50am	2,3,4,5,6,7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily
NW289	5:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
C09603/893	3:15pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via GUM-PALAU
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:35am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7 via NRT
NW277	8:30pm	1:00am+1	3,6
NW639	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW290	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	9:0pm	1:35am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4,6 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1 via ICN	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
C0892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Turner's bid for park bison stokes wildlife debate

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—With 88 bison from Yellowstone National Park facing possible slaughter, billionaire Ted Turner has swept in and offered to hold the animals for five years on his sprawling Montana ranch while a new home for them is found. But Turner, ever the shrewd businessman, won't do it for nothing. The media mogul says he will care for the bison only if he can keep up to 90 percent of their offspring.

And in the Rocky Mountain West—where wildlife is cherished both for its aesthetic value and as meat on the table—the plan is stoking a sharp debate over the role of deep-pocketed private entities in conservation.

Hunters, environmentalists and property law experts have all weighed in and most say Turner's plan sets a dangerous precedent for the commercialization of public wildlife. Others describe Turner as a responsible steward of the land with the resources needed to take care of animals that desperately need a home.

Even the urgency of the situation is open to question.

Despite warnings from Montana about possible slaughter, federal officials said earlier this month that the bison could be kept longer if needed at a quarantine compound north of the park. They have already been there for several years to make sure they are disease free.

Dennis Tilton, a rancher from nearby Livingston who worked for a year feeding the animals under government contract, said giving the animals to Turner amounted to "robbing from the public domain." He said the state should put them onto public land to establish new herds.

Since Turner first came to Montana in 1989, his ambitious conservation efforts in the state have been alternately lauded and reviled. He's shielded more than 150,000 acres from development, but in the process put several prized hunting grounds off limits to the public.

Those who want to continue hunting on his Flying D Ranch, in the Spanish Peaks foothills south of Bozeman, today must pony up $14,000 to shoot a trophy elk.

AP

In this April 29, 2003 file photo, a bison on the Ted Turner property near Oshkosh, Neb, looks at passing cars from behind a fence. With 88 bison from Yellowstone National Park facing possible slaughter, billionaire Ted Turner has swept in and offered to hold the animals for five years on his sprawling Montana ranch while a new home for them is found.

For $4,000, they can harvest a bull bison out of a herd of more than 1,000 of the animals that Turner has been building up for two decades.

His representatives insist the Yellowstone animals are more valuable for their genetics and would be off limits.

Yellowstone's bison, also known as buffalo, represent one the last vestiges of the massive herds that once roamed across North America—tens of millions of animals that were all but wiped out in the late 19th century.

Turner's representatives say his plan for the 88 park bison would advance a long-standing advocacy for wildlife restoration. It also gains him the animals' unique and valuable genetics.

"We don't understand the antipathy," said Turner Enterprises general manager Russell Miller.

He said Turner is interested in the animals as a way to further his private bison conservation efforts, not for their market value.

"That doesn't mean there won't be a market somewhere way out in the future," he added.

Turner's plan is expected to be acted on by the end of the month by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Guernsey State Park in Wyoming has also put in a proposal to the agency for 14 bison.

Subsidies prop up cotton country through downturn

NEW MADRID, Mo. (AP)—The white puff of cotton blooms cover Missouri's Bootheel at harvest, filling both tiny planter boxes outside a Super 8 motel's front door and nearby thousand-acre spreads. "Thank goodness they're able to do it," a radio deejay reminds listeners as farmers take their crop to the gin.

They can, thanks to millions in federal farm subsidies—payments critics say merely funnel money from taxpayers to already wealthy growers. But farmers and agricultural economists argue the subsides have cushioned cotton country—even in the Mississippi Delta, where poverty is a constant—against the ravages the recession.

"Those programs provided that stability out here that other parts of the country might not have experienced," said Darren Hudson, an economist and director of the Cotton Economics Research Institute at Texas Tech University. "That stability provided by the programs helped buffer the region, helped buffer agriculture, which helped soften the blow to the overall region."

The Associated Press Economic Stress Index, a monthly analysis of the economic state of more than 3,100 U.S. counties, indicates that they're right. The Stress Index calculates a score from 1 to 100 based on a county's unemployment, foreclosure and bankruptcy rates. The higher the number, the greater the county's level of economic stress.

The top 50 cotton-growing counties, which are among the country's poorest, have endured economic stress that's essentially the same as the country as a whole. The national average county Stress Index score in November 2009 was 10.2, up from 5.2 in October 2007, when AP began tracking economic data for the index. In the 50 big cotton counties, the average stress score increased a smaller amount, from 5.9 to 10 in November.

Saudi billionaire eyes new links with News Corp.

CAIRO (AP)—The Saudi billionaire whose investment firm is one of the biggest stakeholders in Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. said he is looking to expand his alliances with the media giant, in the latest indication that his appetite for growth remains robust even as his company retrenches.

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, a nephew of the Saudi king and who was listed last year by Forbes as the world's 22nd richest person, met with News Corp.'s chief executive Rupert Murdoch on Jan. 14 in a meeting that "touched upon future potential alliances with News Corp.," according to a statement released by his Kingdom Holding Co. late Saturday.

Media reports have indicated that News Corp, parent to Fox News and Dow Jones & Co., among others, may be thinking of buying a stake in Alwaleed's Rotana Media Group, which includes a number of satellite channels that air in the Middle East.

Neither company has commented publicly on the possible deal, but the talks offer an indication yet that such an agreement may yet be in the offing.

Kingdom Holding's statement said Alwaleed is already the second largest stakeholder in News Corp., with 5.7 percent of the shares of the media company. The stake is held through Kingdom Holding, in which Alwaleed holds a 95 percent stake.

AP

In this May 8, 2008 file photo, News Corp. Chairman and CEO Rupert Murdoch attends Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World Gala in in New York.

The investment company has a diverse portfolio, ranging from hotels to shares in Apple, eBay and Citigroup.

Alwaleed, and the investment firm, were hit hard by the global meltdown.

He has since focused on shoring up borrowing power, in part through a recent decision to transfer 180 million of his shares in Citigroup to Kingdom Holding. In a statement last week, he described the move—valued at about $600 million—as key to facilitating future borrowing and growth.

The Saudi royal also met last week with Citigroup's chief executive Vikram Pandit, according to a statement by Kingdom Holding e-mailed Sunday.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil slips below $78 in Asia as equities fall

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Oil extended its losing streak Monday, slipping below $78 a barrel in Asia amid declines in stock markets and a stronger U.S. dollar. Benchmark crude for February delivery fell was down 52 cents to $77.48 a barrel at midday Kuala Lumpur time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. On Friday, the contract slid $1.39 to settle at $78. The price was down $4.75 for the week after declining for five straight days. Major stock markets in Asia such as Japan and Hong Kong were down early Monday following Friday's decline on Wall Street where rising loan losses at JPMorgan Chase & Co. sparked concerns about profits at other big banks. Bank of America Corp., Citigroup Inc., Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo & Co. are expected to post results this week.

Reports: Kraft to sweeten its offer for Cadbury

Kraft Foods Inc. is expected to sweeten its offer for Cadbury PLC, in an effort to remain in the running as it faces a potential competing bid from Hershey Co. for the British candy maker, according to media reports.

The Sunday Times and The Observer in London said Sunday that Kraft is raising its offer to 820 pence per Cadbury share, or about $13.33, from 771 pence. Cadbury shares closed Friday at 793.5 pence on the London Stock Exchange.

Kraft's earlier offer was valued at 10.3 billion pounds, or about $16.5 billion, which Cadbury rejected as "derisory." ***(AP)***

Asian markets lower after Wall Street declines

HONG KONG (AP)—Asian stock markets slipped Monday as worries about American consumers undermined confidence in the recovery of the world's largest economy. Most markets were lower by less than 1 percent after a sharp decline on Wall Street Friday. Oil prices extended a losing streak, while the dollar gained against the yen and fell against the euro. Concerns about the sustainability of the U.S. economic turnaround troubled investors following a worse-than-expected report that showed consumer sentiment was still sluggish amid anemic growth and rising job losses.

Chavez orders takeover of French hypermarket chain

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—President Hugo Chavez on Sunday ordered the expropriation of a French-owned hypermarket chain that operates close to a dozen stores in Venezuela, accusing it of price speculation following the country's currency devaluation.

Chavez said his government would seize control of the Exito hypermarket chain, majority owned by France-based Casino Guichard Perrachon SA, after lawmakers approve legislation allowing the expropriation of businesses that have raised prices inordinately.

A conglomerate of Colombian companies—Sindicato Antioqueno—holds a minority share of the company.

"I want a file to be opened, and I'll wait for the new law to begin the expropriation of the Exito chain because this cannot be permitted," Chavez said during his weekly radio and television program. "How long are we going to allow a transnational company ... to come here and do this?"

Calls to the offices of Exito seeking comment went unanswered on Sunday.

Victor Maldonado, who leads the Caracas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services, criticized Chavez's announcement, saying government takeovers of private businesses will only exacerbate Venezuela's economic woes.

"The president must correct his economic policy," Maldonado told Union Radio, saying Chavez's socialist-orientated economic policies and efforts to boost the state's role in the economy "are going to ruin us."

Nation

Obama makes last-ditch attempt to save Senate seat

BOSTON (AP)—President Barack Obama was making a last-ditch attempt Sunday to save a Democratic-held Senate seat in Massachusetts—and an important 60th vote for his health care plan—as the top Senate Republican called the shockingly close race a verdict against the bill no matter who wins.

"This is, in effect, a referendum on the national health care bill," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said. "It is perfectly clear if it's unpopular in Massachusetts, it's unpopular everywhere. The American people don't want us to pass this bill."

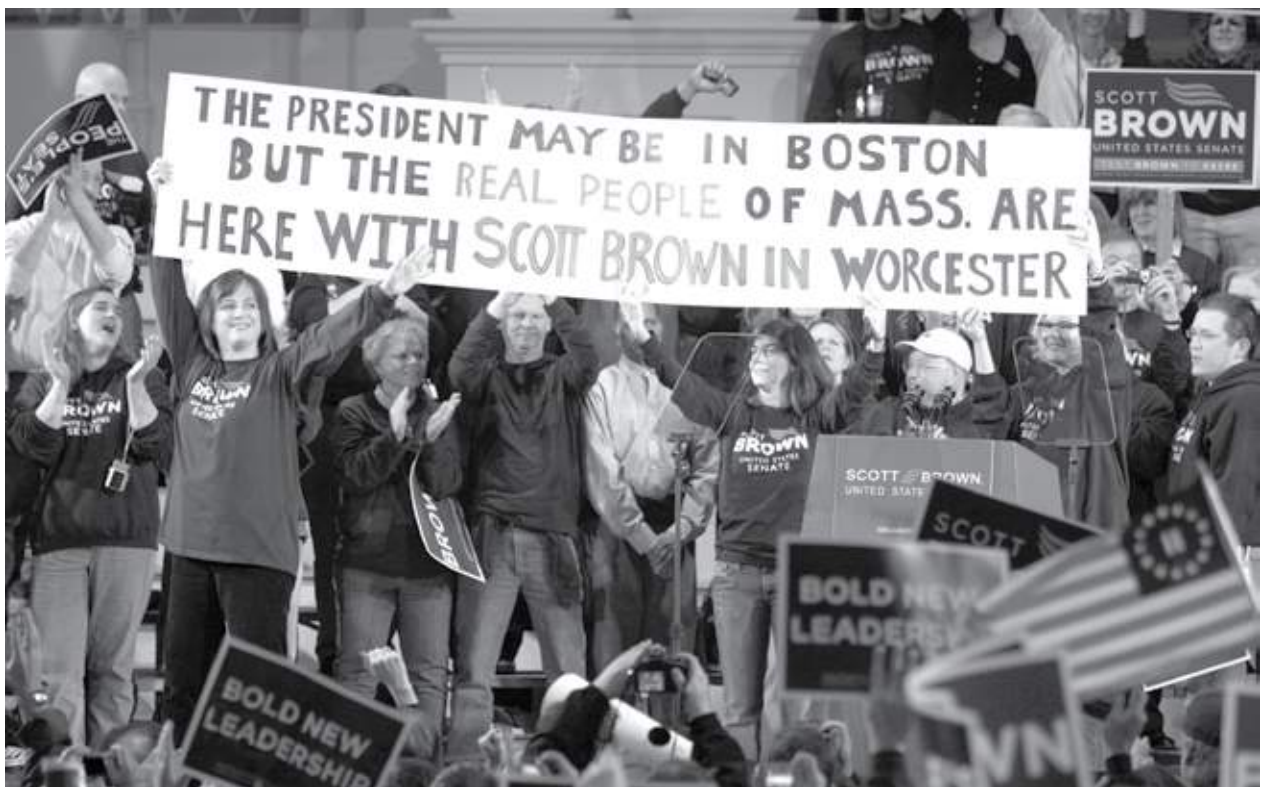
The legislation has dominated the tighter-than-expected race between Democrat Martha Coakley and Republican Scott Brown. She supports the bill. He doesn't and has said he would vote against it, robbing Democrats of the 60-vote majority Obama has been relying on to pass much of his agenda and thwart Republican filibusters.

With so much on the line, Obama was heading to Boston to campaign with Coakley at Northeastern University in the midst of final negotiations over the sweeping health care plan and the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti. His visit underscored the perilous situation facing Democrats in Massachusetts.

Despite the state's long Democratic tradition, Coakley and Brown are in a dead heat heading into Tuesday's special election to replace the late Edward M. Kennedy. Coakley, the state's attorney general, had led Brown, a state senator, by double-digits in polls after the early December primaries.

But the race narrowed considerably over the past week as Brown's populist message resonated with an angry and resentful electorate in an antiestablishment environment. He's energized Republicans as well as attracted disillusioned Democrats and independents worried about taxes, spending, government expansion and health care under Obama. In a race this tight, turnout will be the key.

With the personal visit, Obama is seeking to fire up rank-and-file Democrats who outnumber Republicans in this state but who are dispirited just one year after he took office. Turnout is notoriously low in special elections, and Democrats need their loyalists—particularly blue-collar and minority voters who might not be motivated—to show up at the polls.


THE PRESIDENT MAY BE IN BOSTON
BUT THE REAL PEOPLE OF MASS. ARE
HERE WITH SCOTT BROWN IN WORCESTER
SCOTT BROWN
UNITED STATES SENATE
BOLD NEW LEADERSHIP

AP

Supporters of Massachusetts State Senator Scott Brown, R-Wrentham, hold a sign at a rally in Worcester, Mass., Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010.

Gravel beaches trapping oil from 1989 Exxon spill

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—An engineering professor has figured out why oil remains trapped along miles of gravel beaches more than 20 years after the Exxon Valdez tanker disaster in Prince William Sound.

An estimated 20,000 gallons of crude remain in Prince William Sound, even though oil remaining after the nearly 11-million-gallon spill had been expected to biodegrade and wash away within a few years.

The problem: The gravelly beaches of Prince William Sound are trapping the oil between two layers of rock, with larger rocks on top and finer gravel underneath, according to Michel C. Boufadel, chairman of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Temple University. His study appeared Sunday in Nature Geoscience's online publication and will be published in the journal later.

Boufadel found that water, which could have broken up and dissipated the oil, moved through the lower level of gravel up to 1,000 times slower than the top level.

Once the oil entered the lower level, conditions were right to keep it there, he said. Tidal forces worked to compact the finer-grained gravel even more, creating a nearly oxygen-free environment with low nutrient levels that slowed the ability of the oil to biodegrade.

"The oil could be maybe one foot below the beach surface and in contact with sea water with a lot of oxygen, but the oxygen doesn't get to it," Boufadel said.

AP

In this 2008 photo provided by Temple University, Temple engineering students dig one of numerous wells along the beach in Alaska.

He found that the upper layer of beach is so permeable that the water table falls within it as fast as the tide. However, the permeability of the lower level is so low that the water table does not drop much within it, he said.

Attorney: Man in JFK breach just used 'wrong door'

NEW YORK (AP)—A man returning from Haiti who walked through a restricted door and set off an alarm that led to the evacuation of a terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport simply went the wrong way, his attorney said Sunday.

"He just walked through the wrong door," said defense attorney Scott Dufault, who declined to comment further when reached by phone at his office following his client's arraignment.

The security breach on Saturday afternoon delayed dozens of flights and caused headaches for hundreds of travelers who had to exit the terminal and wait for hours while police swept through the building. Passengers were then re-screened by Transportation Security Administration officers. The incident came less than two weeks after a security breach at nearby Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey.

The man, Jules Paul Bouloute, told police he went through the door by mistake, an official familiar with the investigation into the security breach told The Associated Press on Sunday. The official was not authorized to comment publicly on the case against the Brooklyn man and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Bouloute, 57, was arraigned Sunday on charges including first-degree criminal tampering and third-degree criminal trespass, said Helen Peterson, a spokeswoman for the Queens district attorney. He didn't enter a plea and was released without bail. He faces up to seven years in prison if convicted on the most serious charge.

Prosecutors allege that he went through a door that was clearly marked as restricted.

"As a result of the defendant's actions, thousands of people were required to evacuate and to be re-screened by TSA, causing substantial delays in the airlines' schedules," District Attorney Richard A. Browne said in a statement.

Task force: Screen kids, obesity treatment works

CHICAGO (AP)—An influential advisory panel says school-aged youngsters and teens should be screened for obesity and sent to intensive behavior treatment if they need to lose weight - a move that could transform how doctors deal with overweight children.

Treating obese kids can help them lose weight, the panel of doctors said in issuing new guidelines Monday. But that's only if it involves rigorous diet, activity and behavior counseling.

Just five years ago, the same panel—the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force—found few benefits from pediatric obesity programs. Since then, the task force said, studies have shown success. But that has only come with treatment that is costly, hard to find and hard to follow.

The good news is, "you don't have to throw your arms up and say you can't do anything," said task force chairman Dr. Ned Calonge. "This is a recommendation that says there are things that work."

Calonge said the panel recognizes that most pediatricians are not equipped to offer the necessary kind of treatment, and that it may be hard to find, or afford, places that do. The recommendations merely highlight scientific evidence showing what type of programs work - "not whether or not those services are currently available," he said.

The new advice, published online in the journal Pediatrics, could serve as a template for creating obesity programs. It also might remove one important cost barrier: Calonge said insurers will no longer be able to argue that they won't provide coverage because treatment programs don't work.

Evidence the panel evaluated shows intensive treatment can help children lose several pounds—enough for obese kids to drop into the "overweight" category, making them less prone to diabetes and other health problems. The treatment requires appointments at least once or twice a week for six months or more.

ACROSS THE NATION

4 Miss. college students killed in Ala. motel fire

A fire swept through a two-story motel in central Alabama, killing four Mississippi college students who were trapped in their room, officials said Sunday. The victims were students at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Miss., which is about 90 miles west of Hoover, Ala, the site of the Days Inn fire. Officials didn't immediately know what started the blaze Saturday night, or where it began. The victims were among those who made 911 calls to report the fire, Hoover Fire Department spokesman Rusty Lowe said. Firefighters knew the women were trapped in their second-floor room, but couldn't get to them because of the flames. ***(AP)***

Bay Area girl now says she wasn't kidnapped, raped

RICHMOND, Calif. (AP)—A 15-year-old California girl who claimed she had been kidnapped off the street at gunpoint and raped in the same town where another teenager was assaulted in a gang rape three months earlier told police Sunday she made up the story, authorities said. The 15-year-old had claimed she was forced Friday night into a car with four males at gunpoint and driven around for several hours before two of them raped her. But the girl called Richmond police around 1 p.m. Sunday and told them the story was not true, said Lt. Mark Gagan.

15 sickened on flight from US Virgin Islands to NC

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—US Airways says seven crew members were taken to a hospital from a North Carolina airport after complaining of headaches and nausea aboard a flight. The crew had been on a plane that had just arrived at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport Saturday from St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. US Airways spokeswoman Michelle Mohr said Sunday that eight passengers were treated on the scene and went on to board connecting flights out of Charlotte. Shortly after the plane took off from St. Thomas, crew members noticed an odor and alerted Charlotte authorities. Mohr says the plane has been taken out of service. Authorities are investigating what caused the odor.

Asia

Militants, Afghan police battle in Afghan capital

WORLD BRIEFS

Earthquake in China kills 7 people

BEIJING (AP)—Landslides triggered by a small earthquake in southern China killed at least seven people and left one person missing over the weekend, local earthquake officials said Monday. The 3.4-magnitude earthquake struck Sunday afternoon. It was centered in Guizhou province, 100 kilometers (60 miles) southwest of the capital Guiyang, according to a report from the Guizhou Earthquake Bureau. The earthquake triggered two landslides in separate locations, burying and killing at least seven people instantly with large boulders that tumbled down the mountain, said Tian Xiang, a bureau spokesman.

Philippine police wound, arrest US murder suspect

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—An American man wanted in the Philippines for allegedly killing a government official's son in a road-rage shooting was critically wounded Monday when he opened fire at police officers trying to arrest him, officials said. Two police agents also were wounded when authorities swooped down on Jason Ivler's parents' house in a Manila suburb, triggering a shootout with the suspect, who was hiding in the basement, said National Bureau of Investigation spokesman Ricardo Diaz. Ivler was arrested and taken to a hospital in critical condition, police said. He was undergoing surgery. Ivler, 28, from Hawaii, is accused of fatally shooting the son of an official working in President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's office following an argument during a traffic altercation Nov. 18 in Manila.

5 Americans detained in Pakistan allege torture

SARGODHA, Pakistan (AP)—Five Americans detained in Pakistan on suspicion of terrorism have alleged that they are being tortured. Several of the five men shouted to reporters, "We are being tortured," as they were driven from court Monday. Police investigator Nazir Ahmed says they did not make the allegations while inside the court in Sargodha city in northeast Punjab province, where police submitted charges alleging the men were plotting an act of terrorism. The five men, all from the Washington, D.C., area, have been jailed since their arrest in early December.

KABUL (AP)—Taliban militants struck the heart of the Afghan government in Kabul on Monday, prompting fierce gunbattles after a suicide bomber blew himself up near the presidential palace. More explosions rocked the capital as Afghan troops fought off the attackers.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told The Associated Press that 20 armed militants, including some with suicide vests, had entered Kabul to target the presidential palace and other government buildings.

It was the latest attack showing the insurgents' ability to penetrate the heavily secured city—even near the presidential palace and government ministries. Militants have become increasingly brazen in challenging Afghan and international forces as the U.S. and NATO allies begin sending 37,000 more troops to join the fight.

Police sealed off a large area in the center of Kabul as the clash of machine-gun fire echoed through the mountain-rimmed city.

AP

Smoke rise over Kabul Monday Jan. 18, 2010, after explosions rocked the capital as Afghan troops fought with Taliban militants.

One group of militants entered a supermarket after throwing grenades inside to frighten shoppers, Interior Ministry spokesman Zemari Bashary said.

"The area is surrounded by security forces," he said. "A gunbattle is going on."

Mohib Safi, deputy governor of the central bank, said bank employees heard a strong explosion followed by gunfire. He said employees were safely inside and that no militants had entered the building.

Another huge explosion was heard less than two hours later at an intersection between the Foreign Ministry and the Education Ministry. An Associated Press reporter saw a car burning at the scene.

Afghan security forces surrounded the area, and fighting between the two sides was continuing. Ambulances transported the wounded from the scene.

NATO said international forces were working with Afghan troops to secure the area.

Pakistani officials: Suspected US drone kills 20

MIR ALI, Pakistan (AP)—At least one suspected U.S. drone fired on a house in Pakistan's volatile tribal region Sunday, killing 20 people in the 11th such attack since militants in the area orchestrated a deadly suicide bombing against the CIA in Afghanistan, intelligence officials said.

Four missiles slammed into the house in the Shaktoi area of South Waziristan, the same region where a drone strike Thursday targeted a meeting of militant commanders in an apparently unsuccessful attempt to kill Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud.

The militant leader helped organize the Dec. 30 attack against a remote CIA base in Afghanistan's Khost province that killed seven of the agency's employees and appeared in a video alongside the Jordanian man who carried out the bombing.

Analysts suspect the Haqqani network, an al-Qaida-linked Afghan Taliban faction based in North Waziristan, also helped carry out the CIA attack, the worst against the spy agency in decades.

Since the bombing, the U.S. has carried out eleven suspected drone strikes in North and South Waziristan, an unprecedented volley of attacks since the CIA-led program began in earnest in Pakistan two years ago.

The house targeted in Sunday's attack was being used by Usman Jan, the head of the al-Qaida-linked Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, intelligence officials said. Five Uzbeks were killed in the strike, but it was unclear if Jan was among them. Jan's predecessor, Tahir Yuldash, was also killed in a drone strike in South Waziristan last year.

The other 15 people killed in Sunday's strike were Pakistani Taliban, said the officials.

Four more militants were seriously wounded, but their identities were unknown, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

The U.S. does not usually comment on the drone strikes or their targets, but officials have said in the past that they have taken out several senior al-Qaida and Taliban leaders.

While the Pakistani government publicly condemns the strikes as violations of its sovereignty, it is thought to have a secret deal with Washington allowing them. Pakistani criticism has been especially muted when the drones have targeted militants who pose a threat to the state, such as the Pakistani Taliban chief.

Mehsud issued an audio message Saturday denying he had been killed in the Jan. 14 drone strike that Pakistani intelligence officials said targeted him in Shaktoi, which lies along the border between North and South Waziristan.

"Let me clarify that I was neither wounded nor martyred in this attack, nor was I present in this attack," said Mehsud in a message that Pakistani Taliban spokesman Azam Tariq played for an Associated Press reporter. The reporter recognized the voice as Mehsud's.

China to expand smoking bans in 7 major cities

BEIJING (AP)—Health advocates and Chinese officials are campaigning to enforce smoking bans in seven major cities, the latest sign of rising health awareness in the world's largest tobacco-consuming nation.

The drive organized by the government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention seeks to enforce a ban on indoor smoking in public places and close loopholes in the law.

Cities targeted include some of China's biggest commercial centers—such as Tianjin on the northern coast and the mega-city of Chongqing in the southwest—where smoking and breathing in secondhand smoke add to health threats from traffic, industrial waste, and polluted air and water.

China accounts for more than one-quarter of the world's 1.3 billion smokers, with 2 trillion cigarettes sold in the country every year. About 60 percent of Chinese men smoke, and offering cigarettes remains an important part of gatherings and social interaction.

The project "would help save millions of lives through lowering tobacco consumption and reducing secondhand smoking," said Sinead Jones of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, which is co-sponsoring the campaign.

Jones, the union's director of tobacco control, was quoted in the official China Daily newspaper on Monday. Union officers could not immediately be reached for comment, and calls to the disease control center rang unanswered.

China has nominally banned smoking in public places indoors, but the restrictions are poorly enforced and undermined by official exceptions and government policies that sometimes even encourage tobacco use.

A rural county in central Hubei province last year sparked a public outcry after it proposed a rule urging its officials to smoke more than 230,000 packs of locally produced cigarettes a year to boost tax revenues.

The government said the campaign was an attempt to crack down on fake cigarettes and illegal cigarette smuggling, but called it off in the face of public criticism.

While urban officials have pushed to rein in smoking, spitting, littering and other unsanitary behavior, government finances remain addicted to tobacco.

Taxes from tobacco sales topped 416 billion ($61 billion) last year, up 26.2 percent from 2008, according to a report issued last week by the state tobacco industry regulator. Interest on government loans to the industry added another 97 billion yuan ($14 billion).

"The big increase in tax income from the tobacco industry is actively contributing to the security of government finances," a spokesman for the regulator, Zhang Xiulian, was quoted as saying on its Web site.

Myanmar court hears Suu Kyi appeal of house arrest

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar's highest court began hearing arguments Monday on detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest and is expected to make a ruling later this week.

Suu Kyi's lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court last month after a lower court upheld a decision to sentence her to an additional 18 months of house arrest. She had been convicted in August of violating the previous terms of her detention by briefly sheltering an American intruder who swam uninvited to her lakeside home.

Suu Kyi's lawyer Nyan Win said he will argue the extension was unlawful because it was based on provisions from the 1974 Constitution that are no longer in effect.

The court also agreed to review the house arrest of Suu Kyi's two female companions, who are also ordered confined for 18 months at her compound in Yangon.

Suu Kyi, who was barred from attending the hearing, has been detained for 14 of the past 20 years.

The 64-year-old Nobel Peace Laureate's sentence would ensure she cannot participate in Myanmar's first elections in two decades that will be held sometime this year. Her party swept the last elections in 1990, but the results were never honored by the military, which has ruled the country since 1962.

Nyan Win said the court is expected to issue its ruling in the next few days.

On Friday, Suu Kyi met with Cabinet minister Aung Kyi, part of her National League for Democracy party's efforts to prepare for the elections. Suu Kyi's party has not yet declared whether it will take part in the election.

World

Haitians pray, cry for help in the ruins

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Prayers of thanksgiving and cries for help rose from a roofless cathedral and the huddled homeless Sunday, the sixth day of an epic humanitarian crisis that was straining the world's ability to respond and igniting flare-ups of violence amid the rubble.

A leading aid group echoed complaints about the supply bottleneck and skewed priorities at the U.S.-controlled airport. The general in charge said the U.S. military was "working aggressively" to speed up deliveries.

In the ruins of the Port-Au-Prince cathedral, gathered beneath shattered stained glass for their first Sunday Mass since Tuesday's earthquake, survivors were told by their priest, "We are in the hands of God now." But anger mounted hourly that other helping hands were slow in getting food and water to millions in need.

"The government is a joke. The U.N. is a joke," Jacqueline Thermiti, 71, said as she lay in the dust with dozens of dying elderly outside their collapsed nursing home near the airport. "We're a kilometer (half a mile) from the airport and we're going to die of hunger."

Water was delivered to more people around the capital, where an estimated 300,000 were living in the streets, but food and medicine were still scarce. Pregnant women gave birth in the streets. The injured arrived in wheelbarrows and on people's backs at hurriedly erected field hospitals.

Authorities warned of looting and violence. In downtown Port-au-Prince, where people set bonfires to burn uncollected bodies, gunfire rang out and bands of machete-wielding young men, their faces covered with bandanas, roamed the streets.

"This is one of the most serious crises in decades," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said as he flew into the Haitian capital. "The damage, destruction and loss of life are just overwhelming."

A reliable death toll may be weeks away, but the Pan American Health Organization estimates 50,000 to 100,000 died in the 7.0-magnitude tremor, and Haitian officials believe the number is higher.

Celebrating Mass at the once-proud pink-and-white cathedral, now a shell of rubble where a rotting body lay in the entrance, the Rev. Eric Toussaint preached of thanksgiving to a small congregation of old women and other haggard survivors assembled under the open sky.

"Why give thanks to God? Because we are here," Toussaint said. "What happened is the will of God. We are in the hands of God now."

Mondesir Raymone, a 27-year-old single mother of two, was grateful. "We have survived by the grace of God," she said.

But others were angry.

"It's a catastrophe and it is God who has put this upon us," said Jean-Andre Noel, 39, a computer technician. "Those who live in Haiti need everything. We need food, we need drink, we need medicine. We need help."

Were his parishioners being helped? Toussaint was asked. "Not yet," he replied.

U.N. officials said they were feeding 40,000 people, but must raise that to 2 million within a month. The U.S. aid chief, Rajiv Shah, after visiting Port-au-Prince, told "Fox News Sunday" he believed the U.S. distributed 130,000 "meals ready to eat" on Saturday, but the need was much larger. "We're really trying to address it," he said.

The Geneva-based aid group Doctors Without Borders was blunt: "There is little sign of significant aid distribution."

The "major difficulty," it said, was the bottleneck at the airport, under U.S. military control. It said a flight carrying its own inflatable hospital was denied landing clearance and was being trucked overland from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, almost 200 miles away in the Dominican Republic, delaying its arrival by 24 hours.

French, Brazilian and other officials had earlier complained about the U.S.-run airport's refusal to allow their supply planes to land. A World Food Program official told The New York Times that the Americans' priorities were out of sync, allowing too many U.S. military flights and too few aid deliveries.

The U.S. has completely taken over Port-au-Prince airspace and incoming flights have to register with Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, said Chief Master Sgt. Ty Foster, Air Force spokesman here.

"You won't have the stray cats and dogs allowed to come into the airspace and clog it up," he said.

Elderly and abandoned, 85 Haitians await death

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—The old lady crawls in the dirt, wailing for her pills. The elderly man lies motionless as rats pick at his overflowing diaper.

There is no food, water or medicine for the 85 surviving residents of the Port-au-Prince Municipal Nursing Home, barely a mile (1 1/2 kilometers) from the airport where a massive international aid effort is taking shape.

"Help us, help us," 69-year-old Mari-Ange Levee begged Sunday, lying on the ground with a broken leg and ribs. A cluster of flies swarmed the open fracture in her skull.

One man has already died, and administrator Jean Emmanuel said more would follow soon unless water and food arrive immediately.

"I appeal to anybody to bring us anything, or others won't live until tonight," he said, motioning toward five men and women who were having trouble breathing, a sign that the end was near.

AP

An old man is fed a few nuts by his nephew while lying outside his quake damaged nursing home in Port-au-Prince, Sunday.

The dead man was Joseph Julien, a 70-year-old diabetic who was pulled from the partially collapsed building and passed away Thursday for lack of food.

His rotting body lies on a mattress, nearly indistinguishable from the living around him, so skinny and tired they seemed to be simply waiting for death.

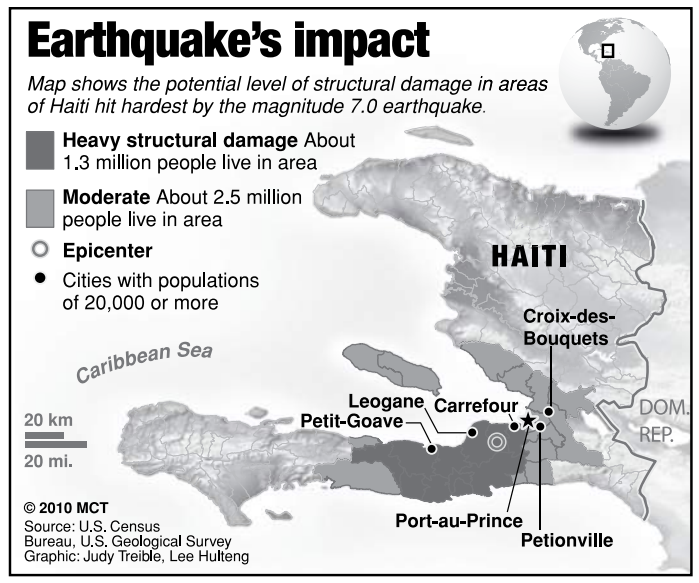
With six residents killed in the quake, the institution now has 25 men and 60 women camped outside their former home. Some have a mattress in the dirt to lie on. Others don't.

Madeleine Dautriche, 75, said some of the residents had pooled their money to buy three packets of pasta, which the dozens of pensioners shared on Thursday, their last meal. Since there was no drinking water, some didn't touch the noodles because they were cooked in gutter water.

Dautriche noted that many residents wore diapers that hadn't been changed since the quake.

"The problem is, rats are coming to it," she said.

Though very little food aid had reached Haitians anywhere by Sunday, Emmanuel said the problem was made worse at the nursing home because it is located near Place de la Paix, an impoverished downtown neighborhood.



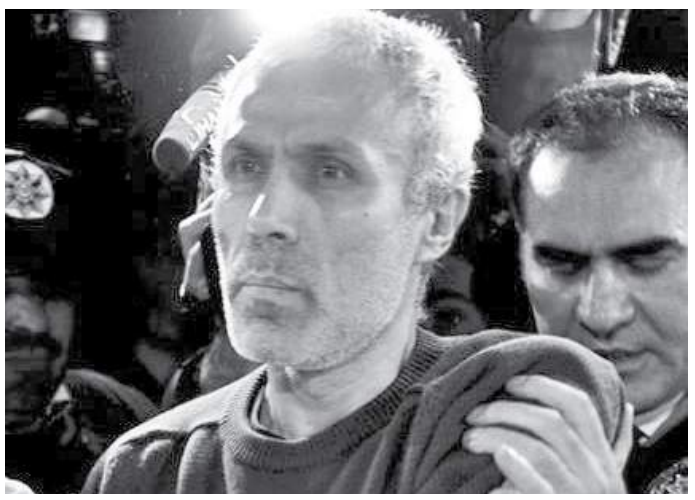
Pope gunman released from prison

ANKARA, Turkey (AP)—The Turkish man who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981 was released from prison on Monday, completing his sentence for crimes committed in Turkey.

Mehmet Ali Agca, who spent more than 29 years behind bars, waved to journalists as he left the prison in a blue sedan car in a convoy of several vehicles. He was heading to a military facility and then to a hospital to be assessed for compulsory military service. A 2006 military hospital report said he is not fit for military service because of a "severe anti-social personality disorder."

John Paul II met with Agca in Italy's Rebibbia prison in 1983 and forgave him for the shooting. The motive for the attack remains unclear.

There have been long-standing questions about Agca's mental health based on his frequent outbursts and claims that he was the Messiah.



AP

Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca, who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981, is surrounded by journalists and police in Istanbul, Turkey, in this Jan. 20, 2006, file photo.

In a statement on Monday, distributed by his lawyer outside the prison in Sincan on the outskirts of Ankara, the Turkish capital, he raved again: "I proclaim the end of the world. All the world will be destroyed in this century. Every human being will die in this century. ... I am the Christ eternal."

WORLD BRIEFS

Israel says Turkey ties warm; analysts skeptical

ANKARA, Turkey (AP)—Israel's defense minister said Sunday that a daylong visit to Turkey had helped end an ugly diplomatic feud but analysts expressed skepticism that the trip would ease tensions rising since Israel's Gaza war. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak told reporters that the countries had moved beyond a disagreement that erupted after Israel's deputy foreign minister deliberately humiliated the Turkish ambassador to express anger over an anti-Israeli show on Turkish television. Israel apologized, and Barak said at a joint news conference with Turkey's defense minister that, "I believe it was a mistake, and the right step was taken according to the norms of diplomacy." "It is appropriate that all the ups and downs in our relationship over the years should be solved and put behind us," Barak said.

Severed head left at grave of Mexican drug lord

CULIACAN, Mexico (AP)—A severed human head and a flower were found in front of the tomb of deceased drug lord Arturo Beltran Leyva in northern Mexico. Prosecutors in Sinaloa state said Sunday the man's headless body was found in a plastic bag atop the tomb of another drug trafficker in the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan. The severed head had a flower tucked behind one ear and had been carefully placed in front of the entrance gate to Beltran Leyva's elaborate, multistory crypt, said prosecutors' spokesman Martin Gastelum.

Exiled Guinea leader appeals for reconciliation

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—Guinea's exiled leader appealed for peace and reconciliation Sunday, urging his countrymen to put aside ethnic differences and set the stage for elections in six months. Speaking to reporters in Burkina Faso's capital, Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara said he had not been pressured to agree to the breakthrough deal Friday that effectively ended the nation's crisis and keeps him in voluntary exile. The agreement calls on Camara's deputy—Gen. Sekouba Konate—to act as interim leader and help organize elections that will hand power to a civilian government this summer.

Overdrive

Ford Fusion Hybrid wins 2010 car of year award

By JEFF KAROUB and TOM KRISHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

Ford Motor Co.'s market momentum got a lift Monday by winning both the 2010 North American Car and Truck of the Year awards.

Ford's Fusion Hybrid midsize sedan took top car honors and its versatile Transit Connect compact van snagged truck of the year at the Detroit auto show.

It was only the third time in 17 years that an automaker has won both awards, selected by 49 auto journalists and given annually since 1994. Finalists for the car award included the Buick LaCrosse and Volkswagen Golf GTI and TDI diesel. The Chevrolet Equinox, Ford Transit Connect and Subaru Outback were finalists for the truck award.

"It's such a huge motivator for our team," Mark Fields, Ford's president of the Americas, told reporters after the announcements on the first day of media previews for the show. "It's a reaffirmation of all the hard work over the past couple of years."

The awards, given annually by journalists who test cars throughout the year, are often used by automakers in advertising. Vehicles are judged on innovation, design, safety, handling, driver satisfaction and value.

Ford, the only U.S.-based automaker to avoid bankruptcy protection, has fared better than its two Detroit rivals, with overall sales down 15 percent last year compared with a 36 percent drop for Chrysler and a 30 percent decline for GM.

Ford's final month of 2009 was strong, with a 33 percent increase in sales thanks to strong demand for midsize cars. Last year, it gained U.S. market share for the first time since 1995, helped by critical raves for its fuel-efficient cars, like the midsize Fusion.

AP
The Ford Fusion Hybrid, the 2010 North American Car of the Year, is displayed at the North American International Auto Show Monday, Jan. 11, 2010 in Detroit.

Its compact Focus and popular Escape crossover also boosted sales.

"We still have a long way to go ... getting the business back to healthy profitability," Fields said. "We have to channel that good feeling into our efforts for 2010."

To be considered for the car and truck of the year honors, vehicles must be new or substantially changed from the previous model.

Last year's winners were the Hyundai Genesis luxury sedan and the Ford F-150 pickup. The Transit Connect, a small, European van, is the sixth Ford truck to win the award. Fields said the automaker thinks of it as a "white space vehicle"—one unlike anything else on the road.

"When you see this on the road, your first reaction is, 'What is that?'" he said. "The second reaction for a lot of customers, particularly small fleets and small business owners is, 'Hey, I want to get into that and check it out.'"

Dodge Ram 2500 might give Fiat its money's worth

By WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

CORNWALL, N.Y.—Fiat came to America to exploit Dodge's truck business, not to bury it.

To denizens of the urbanized East Coast—where work often means moving information instead of bulky physical loads—that might seem an odd assertion. Trucks in city precincts often are deemed gas guzzlers, oversized, motorized ego medallions or dirty work implements best kept out of sight of polite society.

But here in the Hudson River Valley and in similar communities worldwide where farm and other manual labor require lots of heavy lifting and hauling, trucks in general, and pickup trucks in particular, are needed and revered.

Italian automaker Fiat, long one of the world's great manufacturers of pickups and other commercial vehicles, knows this. And it knows that, sooner or later, the Great Recession will stop receding and the global economy will start moving forward, giving trucks a new reason for being and the companies that make them an expanded source of income.

All of which is why Fiat last year undertook to "save" Chrysler from bankruptcy liquidation. Fiat wants to reshape and own the best pieces itself, and Chrysler's storied Dodge Truck division is one of the best, as evidenced by this week's subject vehicle, the 2010 Dodge Ram 2500 TRX4 Crew Cab.

It's a monster machine, which means it's not an especially welcome sight, nor is it the most convenient mode of personal transport in a congested urban setting. But up here, where populations tend to be small and the square miles separating them many, with lots to haul and tow in between, over sometimes challenging roads, the Ram 2500 is a welcome friend.

THE WASHINGTON POST
There are 20 different styles of the 2010 Dodge Ram 2500, of which the Ram 2500 TRX4 (four-wheel drive) and TRX2 (rear-wheel drive), are designed more for sport (recreational off-road driving in the TRX4, for example) than labor. Regardless of the model, we're talking about one tough truck.

NUTS & BOLTS

COMPLAINTS
It's a bumpy ride over any imperfect road. It will wear you out on a round-trip run of 600 miles.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
Enough said.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
The Ram 2500 looks tough and mean, especially in TRX4 trim. It is.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT
The 2010 Ram 2500 TRX4 Crew Cab is a front-engine, full-size pickup truck with four side doors and a short cargo bed. Construction is body-on-frame. It is available with rear-wheel drive or four-wheel drive (part-time four-wheel drive with high-low gear selection).

STANDARD ENGINE/TRANSMISSION
It is equipped with a 5.7-liter, 16-valve, gasoline-fueled V-8 engine that develops 383 horsepower at 5,600 revolutions per minute and 400 foot-pounds of torque at 4,000 rpm. The engine is mated to a five-speed automatic transmission.

CAPACITIES
There are seats for six people. Maximum payload, the weight of what can be carried onboard, is 2,460 pounds. Maximum towing capacity is 12,650 pounds. The fuel tank holds 34 gallons of recommended regular gasoline.

MILEAGE
Mileage depends on the style and equipment package, payload, trailer weight, driving conditions and personal driving style. In other words, you don't get much. Taking in all of those conditions and possibilities, my wife, Mary Anne, and I averaged 15 miles per gallon in the city and barely 21 mpg on the highway.

SAFETY
We were disappointed. Electronic stability and traction control were not available at this writing—in a truck this big! Head air bags were installed, but not side air bags. Note to Fiat: This is where you can start making Dodge trucks much better.

PRICE
The base price on the tested 2010 four-wheel-drive Ram 2500 Crew Cab is $38,480. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $35,405. Price as tested including options (largely cosmetic TRX quick-order package 26T, onboard navigation, electronic backup assistance, on/off-road tires, premium sound system with iPod connectivity, satellite radio, and other items) is $44,420. Dealer's price as tested is $40,597. Rebates totaling $1,000 were available at this writing. Prices were sourced from Dodge, Edmunds.com, and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

Please note that I referred to the "Ram 2500," as opposed to the specific "Ram 2500 TRX4 Crew Cab." There are 20 different styles of the 2010 Ram 2500, of which the Ram 2500 TRX4 (four-wheel drive) and TRX2 (rear-wheel drive), are designed more for sport (recreational off-road driving in the TRX4, for example) than labor.

Still, we're talking about one tough truck. But it would make more sense with a diesel engine, such as the optional 6.7-liter, inline 6-cylinder, 350-horsepower Cummins turbo-diesel installed in the top Ram 2500 TRX model.

Diesel engines generally offer better fuel economy and more torque (more engine twisting power to do the work) than gasoline engines.

The gasoline-powered Ram 2500 TRX4 driven for this column acquitted itself well on uphill drives under load (a payload of 1,673 pounds).

It rolled problem-free through snow and mud.

It also behaved well in long-distance, high-speed highway traffic in terms of acceleration and flat-road ride comfort. But its factory weight—weight minus occupants and cargo—is 6,340 pounds. Included in that mass is a traditional truck suspension—solid live axles front and rear with a front stabilizer bar—that eagerly transfers the unhappiness of every struck bump and deep pothole to the bottoms and backs of the truck's occupants.

A standard 5.7-liter, 383 hp, regular-gas V-8 propels the Ram 2500 TRX4. It's a thirsty beast. But switching to rear-wheel-drive mode on paved roads saves fuel. Twisting a dashboard knob automatically puts it in four-wheel high or in four-wheel low. A dashboard-mounted button operates a tow-haul system to help reduce engine noise and stress and improve fuel economy under heavy loads.

Conventional wisdom, particularly that emanating from the pinstriped valleys of Wall Street and along the Potomac River, said Fiat would save Chrysler by teaching the American company how to make small cars.

The likelihood is that some of that teaching will go on, especially if gasoline prices shoot up again.

But also likely is that the Italians will learn something new from the Americans about pickup trucks and take that knowledge to the bank. And that's the real bottom line of this story.

Life & Style

Cameron's 'Avatar' wins best drama honor at Globes

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—The science-fiction blockbuster "Avatar" won best drama at the Golden Globes and picked up the directing honor for James Cameron on Sunday, raising the "Titanic" filmmaker's prospects for another Academy Awards triumph.

It was a repeat of Cameron's Globes night 12 years ago, when "Titanic" won best drama and the directing prize on its way to dominating the Oscars.

This time, though, instead of being "king of the world," as Cameron declared at the Oscars, he has become king of an alien landscape, elevating space fantasy to enormous critical acclaim.

"'Avatar' asks us to see that everything is connected, all human beings to each other, and us to the Earth. And if you have to go four and a half light years to another, made-up planet to appreciate this miracle of the world that we have right here, well, you know what, that's the wonder of cinema right there, that's the magic," Cameron said.

Winning the dramatic-acting honors were Sandra Bullock for the football tale "The Blind Side" and Jeff Brides for the country-music story "Crazy Heart." The crowd gave a standing ovation to Bridges, a beloved veteran generally overlooked for key Hollywood honors.

The acting prizes for musical and comedy went to Meryl Streep for the Julia Child story "Julie & Julia" and Robert Downey Jr. for the crime romp "Sherlock Holmes." The supporting-performance Globes were won by Mo'Nique as an abusive welfare mother in "Precious" and Christoph Waltz as a gleefully bloodthirsty Nazi in "Inglourious Basterds."

The Vegas bachelor bash "The Hangover" won for best musical or comedy, bringing uncharacteristic awards attention for broad comedy, a genre that often gets overlooked at Hollywood honors.

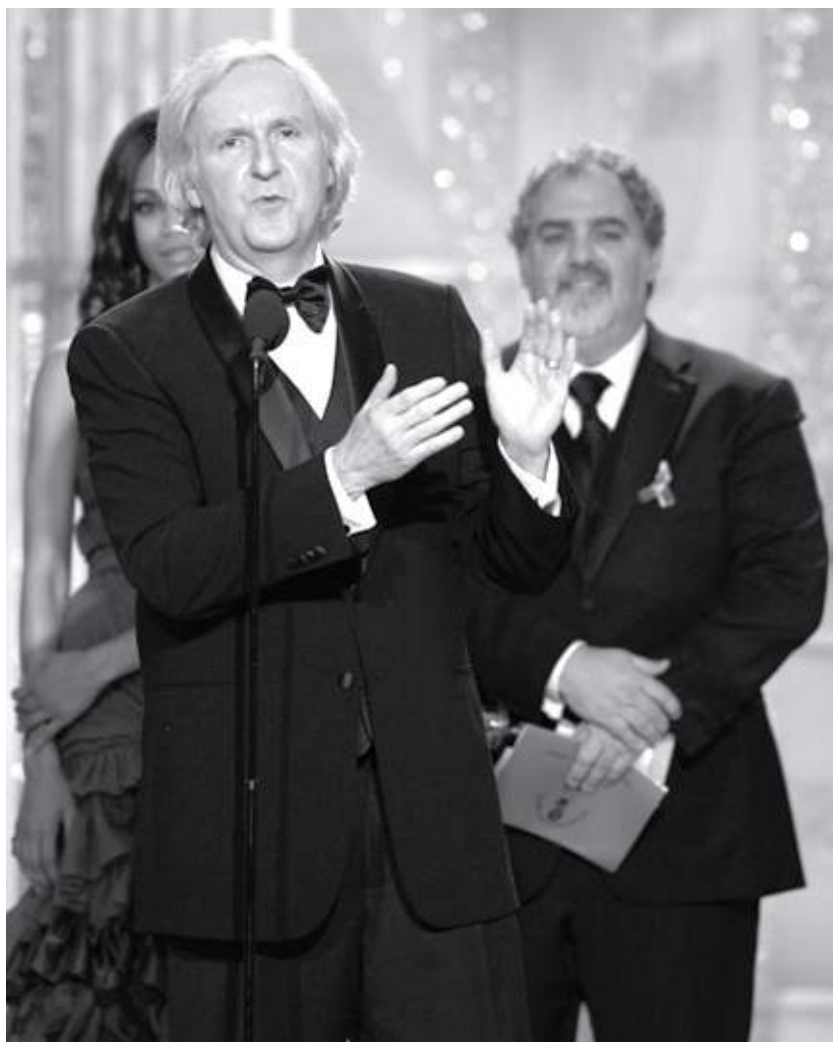
"I just want to thank my mom, who supported my decision to become a director when she realized I wasn't as smart as my two sisters," said "Hangover" director Todd Phillips.

As he accepted the directing Globe, Cameron had kind words for ex-wife Kathryn Bigelow, nominated as best director for "The Hurt Locker."

"Frankly, I thought Kathryn was going to get this. She richly deserves it," said Cameron, whose "Titanic" earned the directing and best-drama Globes 12 years ago on its way to Academy Awards triumph.

The blockbuster "Up" came away with the award for animated film.

While Streep is a perennial at awards shows, the prize marked a dramatic turning point for Mo'Nique, who was mainly known for lowbrow comedy but startled audiences with her ferocious performance in "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' By Sapphire."



AP

In this image released by NBC, James Cameron, winner of best motion picture drama for "Avatar," is shown on stage during the 67th Annual Golden Globe Awards held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"First let me say, thank you, God, for this amazing ride that you're allowing me to go on," the tearful Mo'Nique told the crowd.

She went on with gushing praise for "Precious" director Lee Daniels and newcomer Gabourey Sidibe, a best dramatic actress nominee at the Globes with her first film role, playing Mo'Nique's abused, illiterate daughter.

"Lee Daniels, the world gets a chance to see how brilliant you are. You are a brilliant, fearless, amazing director who would not waver, and thank you for trusting me," Mo'Nique said. "To Gabby, sister, I am in awe of you. Thank you for letting me play with you."

Streep's competition for best actress in a musical or comedy included herself. She also was nominated for the romance "It's Complicated."

"I just want to say that in my long career, I've played so many extraordinary woman that I'm getting mistaken for one," Streep said. "I'm very clear that I'm the vessel for other people's stories and other people's lives."

Waltz, a veteran Austrian actor who is a relative newcomer in Hollywood, won the supporting-actor Globe as a gleefully bloodthirsty Nazi in Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds."

"A year and a half ago I was exposed to the gravitational forces of Quentin Tarantino," Waltz said. "He took my modest little world, my globe, and with the power of his talent and his words and his vision, he flung it into its orbit, a dizzying experience."

Though one of Hollywood's biggest parties, the Globes bore somber reminders of tragedy in the real world, many stars wearing ribbons in support of earthquake victims in Haiti.

Films from Pixar Animation, the Disney outfit that made "Up," have won all four prizes for animated movies since the Globes introduced the category in 2006. Past Pixar winners are "WALL-E," "Ratatouille" and "Cars."

"Up" features the voice of Ed Asner in a tale of a lonely, bitter widower who renews his zest for adventure by flying his house off under helium balloons to South America, where he encounters his childhood hero and a hilarious gang of talking canines.

"When it came to finding the heart of the film, we didn't have to look very hard," said "Up" director Pete Docter, whose film also won for musical score. "Our inspiration was all around us. Our grandparents, our parents, our wives, our kids. Our talking dogs."

Jason Reitman and Sheldon Turner won the screenplay honor for "Up in the Air," which Reitman also directed. The foreign-language honor went to "The White Ribbon," a stark drama of guilt and suspicion set in a German town on the eve of World War I.

"Mad Men" won for best TV drama, while Michael C. Hall won for best actor in a TV drama for "Dexter," in which he plays a serial killer with a code of ethics, killing only other murderers. Hall's publicists revealed this past week that Hall is being treated for Hodgkin's lymphoma and that the cancer is in remission.

"It's really a hell of a thing to go to work in a place where everybody gives a damn. That's really the case with `Dexter,'" Hall said. "It's a dream job. I'm so grateful."

"Dexter" also won the supporting-actor TV honor for John Lithgow. Other TV winners included Juliana Margulies as best actress in a drama for "The Good Wife" and Toni Collette as best comedy actress for "The United States of Tara."

The rain-drenched red carpet was a rare sight for an awards show in sunny southern California, stars in their finery getting damp under umbrellas as storms swept the region.

WINNERS' LIST

Winners for the 67th annual Golden Globe Awards, announced Sunday in Beverly Hills, California:

MOTION PICTURES:

- Picture, Drama: "Avatar."
- Picture, Musical or Comedy: "The Hangover."
- Actor, Drama: Jeff Bridges, "Crazy Heart."
- Actress, Drama: Sandra Bullock, "The Blind Side."
- Director: James Cameron, "Avatar."
- Actor, Musical or Comedy: Robert Downey Jr., "Sherlock Holmes."
- Actress, Musical or Comedy: Meryl Streep, "Julie & Julia."
- Supporting Actor: Christoph Waltz, "Inglourious Basterds."
- Supporting Actress: Mo'Nique, "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."
- Foreign Language: "The White Ribbon."
- Animated Film: "Up."
- Screenplay: Jason Reitman and Sheldon Turner, "Up in the Air."
- Original Score: Michael Giacchino, "Up."
- Original Song: "The Weary Kind" (theme from "Crazy Heart"), (written by Ryan Bingham, T Bone Burnett).

AP

Robert Downey Jr., Best Actor, Musical or Comedy

AP

Sandra Bullock, Best Actress, Drama

AP

Toni Collette, Best Actress, Musical or Comedy

TELEVISION:

- Series, Drama: "Mad Men," AMC.
- Actor, Drama: Michael C. Hall, "Dexter."
- Actress, Drama: Julianna Margulies, "The Good Wife."
- Series, Musical or Comedy: "Glee," Fox.
- Actor, Musical or Comedy: Alec Baldwin, "30 Rock."
- Actress, Musical or Comedy: Toni Collette, "United States of Tara."
- Miniseries or Movie: "Grey Gardens," HBO.
- Actor, Miniseries or Movie: Kevin Bacon, "Taking Chance."
- Actress, Miniseries or Movie: Drew Barrymore, "Grey Gardens."
- Supporting Actor, Series, Miniseries or Movie: John Lithgow, "Dexter."
- Supporting Actress, Series, Miniseries or Movie: Chloe Sevigny, "Big Love."

AP

Drew Barrymore, Best Actress, Miniseries or Movie

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED

Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award: Martin Scorsese.

Pink, purple provide the sunshine at rainy Globes

By SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
AP FASHION WRITER

Pink and purple gowns were the bright spots at the Golden Globe Awards on Sunday night as rain darkened the red carpet in Beverly Hills, Calif. Sandra Bullock, Emily Blunt, Fergie, Diane Kruger and Maggie Gyllenhaal were leading the way on the trend.

The other hot look was black, mostly strapless or off-the-shoulder numbers, with Penelope Cruz, Kyra Sedgwick, Courteney Cox, Lea Michele and Heather Graham finding a way to make a statement with their versions of not-so-basic black. Cruz's lace gown, from a 2005 Giorgio Armani Prive collection, for example, had a dramatic floral-pattern neckline and ribbon striping,

Amy Adams did the popular one-shoulder silhouette in a black Carolina Herrera that embraced her pregnant shape.

Meryl Streep's black gown even slid off her shoulder.

Mariah Carey's black, body-hugging Herve Leger gown gave a new definition to "open neckline."

Linda Wells, Allure magazine's editor-in-chief, said black can be a little boring but it was a better choice than the beige and gray that also had a strong presence.

"The problem isn't even the weather, it's that those colors don't look good on TV—and if it doesn't look good on TV, you've missed the boat," Wells said. "Those colors look beautiful in real life but not on camera."

Wells' favorites included Bullock's bold orchid strapless gown by Bottega Veneta and Blunt's pale-pink frothy gown by Dolce & Gabbana.

Those light-toned cosmetic colors, however, did catch the eye of InStyle fashion director Cindy Weber Cleary—and she liked what she saw, especially on Kate Hudson—in white Marchesa—and Nicole Kidman. She also picked Blunt as a winner.

"There wasn't a lot of hideousness. People were tasteful, prettier, more feminine. ... It was overall less flashy than it's been in the past," Weber Cleary said.

Ruffles replaced bling in many cases but ruffles in the wrong places can draw unwanted attention. Kruger, in Christian Lacroix, and Christina Hendricks, who wore a ruffle-covered Christian Siriano gown in a light apricot color, might want to remember that.

They both wore the trend-right up-do hairstyle and bright lipstick, though. But the must-have item of the night was the oversized red-and-white striped umbrella stamped with The Beverly Hilton logo.

Stars such as Cruz, Paul McCartney, Ricky Gervais, Jon Hamm, Adrian Grenier and Lisa Edelstein were eager to show off their red-yellow-and-blue ribbons pinned to their purses and lapels that were to remind each other as well as TV viewers of the plight being suffered by Haiti's earthquake victims.

Olivia Wilde wore a fully beaded jet-and-silver sequined Gucci with a pageant-style drape that ran along one side of the plunging V-neck. Wilde announced that Gucci would be donating it for an auction to benefit Haiti relief efforts.

Edelstein wore a silver halter gown with a deep V-front and diamond flower at her waist. She wasn't bothered by the rain: "I'm from the East Coast and I'm Irish, so it's not that bad."

But Jennifer Garner, in a slate beaded Versace with a complicated strappy back, told E! the weather posed the biggest challenge for hairdressers. "It was an Aqua Net kind of day."

Wells liked Graham's ponytail, who continued the streamlined look in her black beaded Elie Saab.

Mo'Nique pulled her hair up neatly and wore a simple gold strapless gown by Reem Acra, letting her personality—and a 15-carat diamond bracelet by Martin Katz—shine through. Gabourey Sidibe wore a dark green Kevan Hall V-neck gown with an emerald-colored crystal waistband.

AP

Maggie Gyllenhaal arrives at the 67th Annual Golden Globe Awards on Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Carey Mulligan took a 19th-century diamond necklace from Fred Leighton and created a headband out of it, worn with a Nina Ricci gown made of navy and black organza and guipure lace.

This year's Globes boasted a lot of fashion's heavy hitters, including Drew Barrymore, who wore a champagne Versace gown with glittery clusters of glass fringes on the shoulder and hip; Kate Winslet in Yves Saint Laurent in a midnight-blue, asymmetric-strap gown with pearl and crystal embroidery; and Julianne Moore, who wore a Balenciaga bustier gown, but escorted designer-turned-director Tom Ford on the carpet.

Marion Cotillard's deep green Christian Dior gown had a super-high slit right in front.

Jane Krakowski wore a one-strap purple gown by J.Mendel, Heidi Klum did an off-the-shoulder number in dove gray by Roberto Cavalli and Julianna Margulies wore a Narciso Rodriguez dress with a red beaded neckline and black column bodice.

The new guard who left a stylish impression included Ginnifer Goodwin in an indigo cocktail dress by Vionnet and Michele of "Glee" in a tiered, strapless Oscar de le Renta.

January Jones, whose fashion-plate character on "Mad Men" may have single-handedly brought back nipped waists and full skirts to the everywoman's closet, wore an understated black wool gown by Lanvin. "I tried to avoid doing the '60s look."

Civil rights veteran becomes Internet sensation

ON THE NET

Larry Platt's "American Idol" audition: http://www.americanidol.com/videos/season_9/memorable_auditions/larry_platt/

ATLANTA (AP)—Pants. On. The. Ground. With those four words, "General" Larry Platt has gone from a reject on the reality TV singing competition "American Idol" to Internet sensation.

The 63-year-old civil rights veteran performed his original song about baggy trousers at an audition for the show's ninth season, winning over judges Randy Jackson and Kara DioGuardi—and earning a nervous endorsement from incurable skeptic Simon Cowell.

"I have a horrible feeling that song could be a hit," Cowell reluctantly predicted.

Platt's fan base exploded after the show Wednesday night, as his audition hit YouTube and Twitter. Within hours, he had been clicked and tweeted into one of the Internet's most popular topics.

On Thursday at his home in East Atlanta, the e-celebrity seemed dazed by the attention.

His show-stealing performance came at the end of the popular show that featured auditions from Atlanta taped on Aug. 17.

The spotlight on him, Contestant 103519 began singing—rapping?—the now infamous verse: "Pants on the ground! Pants on the ground! Looking like a fool with your pants on the ground!"

Within moments of Platt chanting the chorus, singer and guest judge Mary J. Blige sank into her chair and howled with laughter, tears filling her eyes. Jackson bobbed his head and smiled. And just as a scowl-faced Cowell tried to wrap up the performance, Platt dropped to the ground in a split.

AP

Larry Platt performs his rap "Pants on the Ground" outside his home in Atlanta, Thursday,, Jan. 14, 2010 in Atlanta. Platt performed the song during an audition for American Idol.

Platt's song was referring to a style popular among young people in which they belt their trousers below the waist, exposing their underwear. The fashion is believed to have started in prisons, where inmates are not given belts with their baggy uniform pants to prevent hangings and beatings. By the late 1980s, the trend had made it to gangster rap videos, then went on to skateboarders in the suburbs and high school hallways.

For Platt, the song was just another one of his causes. He said Thursday that he and his civil rights colleagues sacrificed too much for today's youth to walk around with sagging trousers.

Platt—his black jeans securely fastened—proudly showed off black and white photographs of himself alongside civil rights icons Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Congressman John Lewis, and pointed to plaques from city and state officials recognizing his social justice work as a dedicated foot soldier with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Platt, who worked to elect President Barack Obama, is still an activist, and can frequently be seen in downtown Atlanta holding signs protesting foreclosures, war, violence, racism and "any wicked things that take place."

After seeing a young father with his jeans below his waist, Platt said he was inspired to write "Pants On The Ground," and hopes his message of personal responsibility doesn't get lost in his popularity.

Bolstered by his newfound fame, Platt doesn't plan to stop singing his "Idol" anthem anytime soon.

Shaking his head at the end of the song, Cowell delivered the news that Platt was about three decades too old for the show.

But, he offered: "I don't think this is gonna be the last we hear about you. I have a feeling about you, Larry."

Leno gets support from staff

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Longtime members of Jay Leno's TV staff spoke up for their boss, saying he's being wrongly cast as the bad guy in NBC's late-night upheaval.

"Any idea that Jay has forced the issue to get back on `The Tonight Show' is not true," said producer Jack Coen, who has worked with Leno for 14 years. "The network asked him to make a compromise. He's being a good soldier, and he's being trashed."

Leno, typically cast as an easygoing everyman, has faced online chatter and some reports suggesting he's wresting "Tonight" from Conan O'Brien. Tracie Fiss, a co-producer who has worked with Leno for 18 years, said her reaction to such characterizations is "frustration."

"Jay doesn't have the power to make these decisions. The decisions are made by NBC," she said.

Settlement talks continued Sunday on a deal that would let O'Brien leave NBC and "Tonight," and put Leno back into the 11:35 p.m. EST time slot he occupied for 17 years through last spring. NBC is dropping "The Jay Leno Show," his disappointing prime-time show that debuted last fall at 10 p.m.

A proposed deal would give O'Brien more than $30 million for leaving and allow him to go to another network as early as this fall, according to people familiar with the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the negotiations.

After O'Brien rejected NBC's initial plan to move him and "Tonight" to midnight EST and give Leno a half-hour show at 11:30 p.m. EST, the flap became monologue fodder for them and for other late-night hosts. The exchanges, which grew increasingly pointed and with Leno often the target, have been widely reported.

Appearing by satellite last week for Leno's "Ten at Ten" question-and-answersegment, ABC's Jimmy Kimmel was asked to relate his best prank ever. Kimmel replied that he told a guy five years ago that he'd give him his show, and "then I took it back."

It was a thinly veiled reference to Leno's agreement in 2004 to surrender "The Tonight Show" to O'Brien last year.

Coen, who worked on "Tonight" with Leno and is a producer on Leno's prime-time show in charge of writing, said such barbed humor isn't unusual among comedians but contends it's being misinterpreted in news reports.

"It's interesting to be on this side of the story and see how it's being reported. They act as if he's the corporate lapdog but also the master marionette forcing these issues," Coen said.

If Leno emerges with "Tonight" but with his image scarred, it could have ramifications for him and his show.

'Avatar' passes 'Star Wars' with $491.8M in US

LOS ANGELES (AP)—James Cameron's "Avatar" had a $41.3 million weekend to shoot past "Star Wars" as the No. 3 movie on the all-time domestic box office charts. Next stop, "The Dark Knight."

No. 1 for the fifth-straight weekend, Cameron's sci-fi saga raised its domestic total to $491.8 million and should top $500 million after revenues are counted on Martin Luther King Day, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Worldwide, 20th Century Fox's "Avatar" lifted its total to $1.6 billion, second only to Cameron's last movie, 1997's "Titanic," at $1.8 billion.

"One guy makes two movies in 10 years, and they're by far the biggest movies of all time. That's remarkable," said Chris Aronson, head of distribution for the studio.

"Avatar" topped the original "Star Wars," which took in $460.9 million domestically in its original run and several reissues over the years. But factoring in today's higher admission prices, "Star Wars" remains well ahead of "Avatar" on actual number of tickets sold.

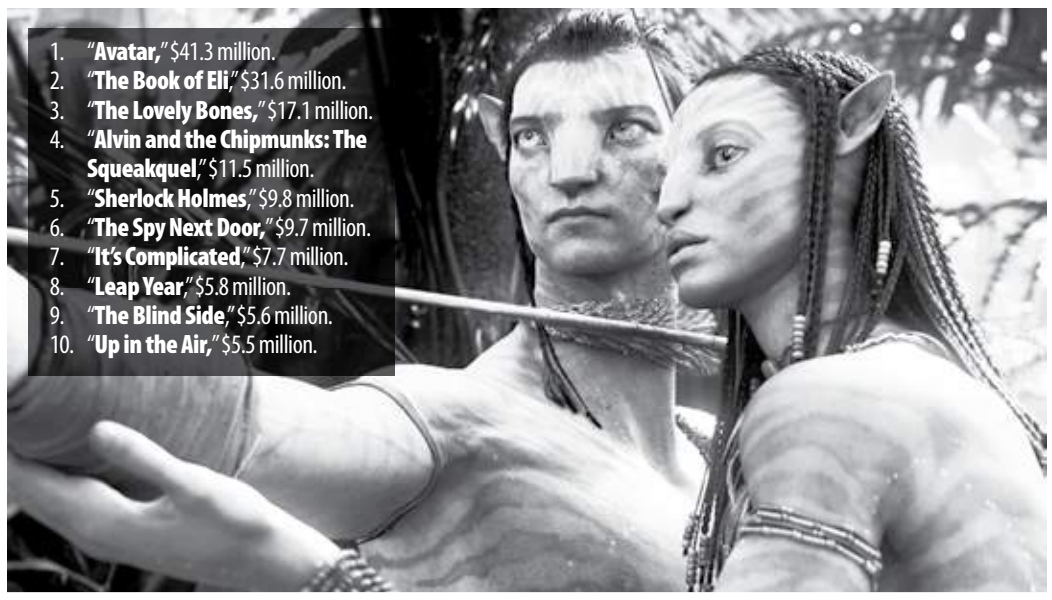
"Avatar" now is closing in on "The Dark Knight," No. 2 domestically with $533.3 million. After that, only Cameron's "Titanic" at $600 million will remain ahead of "Avatar" domestically.

"We'll be proud of our No. 3 slot," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros., which released "The Dark Knight" and has hopes for more in the Batman franchise from its director, Christopher Nolan. "I can just give Chris Nolan a nudge that he's got to raise the bar."

Warner, which has Nolan's sci-fi tale "Inception" with Leonardo DiCaprio opening this July, had a strong No. 2 debut of $31.6 million for its action thriller "The Book of Eli." The movie stars Denzel Washington as a post-apocalypse prophet carrying the last known Bible to safe haven across a decimated America.

Expanding nationwide after a month in limited release, Paramount's drama "The Lovely Bones" came in at No. 3 with $17.1 million. Directed by "The Lord of the Rings" creator Peter Jackson, "The Lovely Bones" features Saoirse Ronan, Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz and Stanley Tucci in the story of a murdered teen looking back on the world from the afterlife.

Lionsgate's family action tale "The Spy Next Door" debuted at No. 6 with $9.7 million. It stars Jackie Chan as a newly retired agent forced back into the spy game when bad guys come after him and his girlfriend's kids.


1. "Avatar," $41.3 million.
2. "The Book of Eli," $31.6 million.
3. "The Lovely Bones," $17.1 million.
4. "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel," $11.5 million.
5. "Sherlock Holmes," $9.8 million.
6. "The Spy Next Door," $9.7 million.
7. "It's Complicated," $7.7 million.
8. "Leap Year," $5.8 million.
9. "The Blind Side," $5.6 million.
10. "Up in the Air," $5.5 million.

AP

In this file film publicity image released by 20th Century Fox, the character Neytiri, voiced by Zoe Saldana, right, and the character Jake, voiced by Sam Worthington are shown in a scene from, "Avatar."

Like "Titanic," which dominated the Academy Awards 12 years ago, "Avatar" is expected to remain aloft in the box office charts as Oscar season progresses. "Avatar" was up for best drama at Sunday's Golden Globes and is considered a likely best-picture nominee when Oscar nominations come out Feb. 2.

"It's kind of the cherry on top of the cake for this movie to not only be a massive box office hit, but to get all this awards attention," said Paul Dergarabedian, box office analyst for Hollywood.com. "It's hard sometimes to get a 50- or 60-year-old out of their chair to go see a science-fiction movie in 3-D. But if `Avatar' gets enough recognition from the critics, they may just do it."

Fox executive Aronson would not say if the studio expects "Avatar" to pass either the $600 million domestic total for "Titanic" or its $1.8 billion worldwide total. Some box office watchers say "Avatar" could climb as high $2 billion, though.

"`Titanic' was a ship. Batman had a motorcycle. `Avatar's' a rocket ship," Aronson said. "Is there a lot of fuel left in the tank? You bet."

Even if "Avatar" sets a new revenue record, it's doubtful it would sell as many tickets as "Titanic" did because of today's higher admission prices.

"Titanic" sold about 130 million tickets domestically based on average ticket prices of about $4.60 back in 1997 and 1998. Based on today's average domestic price of about $7.50, "Avatar" would be at around half that mark.

Average admission prices for "Avatar" likely run even higher, given that much of its business comes from a 3-D version, which costs a few dollars extra to see.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Tuesday.

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The Book of Eli
Friday 4:20 7:10 9:40
Saturday & Sunday 1:30 4:20 7:10 9:40
Monday 1:30 4:20 7:10
Tues thru Thurs 4:20 7:10
Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman
Action • Rated R
Synopsis
In a post-apocalyptic America where the once-picturesque countryside has become a desolate and violent wasteland, one man (Denzel Washington) fights to protect that sacred tome that could hold the key to the survival of the human race in this futuristic thriller from filmmaking duo Albert and Allen Hughes (From Hell and Dead Presidents). Gary Oldman, Mila Kunis, and Ray Stevenson co-star in the Warner Bros. production.

The Spy Next Door
Friday 4:30 7:20 9:35
Saturday & Sunday 1:10 4:30 7:20 9:35
Monday 1:10 4:30 7:20
Tues thru Thurs 4:30 7:20
Jackie Chan, George Lopez
Comedy • Rated PG
Synopsis
A man (Jackie Chan) is forced to defend some neighborhood children who have been put in his care against secret agents looking for a stolen secret code in this Relativity Media family action film. Are We There Yet's helmer Brian Levant directs from a script by Jonathan Bernstein and Jim Greer.

Daybreakers
Friday 4:10 7:30 9:50
Saturday & Sunday 1:20 4:10 7:30 9:50
Monday 1:20 4:10 7:30
Tues thru Thurs 4:10 7:30
Ethan Hawke, William Dafoe
Horror • Rated R
Synopsis
Fresh off the success of their inventive take on the zombie genre, Undead masterminds Michael and Peter Spierig direct Ethan Hawke in an ambitious tale of a futuristic Earth populated entirely by vampires, and the efforts made by the creatures to ensure that their food supply doesn't run out as humankind is faced with extinction. The year is 2017, and a vampire plague has turned most of the planet's human population into bloodsucking ghouls.

Youth in Revolt
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday & Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Monday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Tues thru Thurs 4:00 7:00
M. Emmet Walsh, Fred Willard
Comedy • Rated R

Sherlock Holmes
Friday 4:05 7:05 9:55
Saturday & Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:05 9:55
Monday 1:05 4:05 7:05
Tues thru Thurs 4:05 7:05
Robert Downey, Jr., Jude Law
Action, Mystery • Rated PG 13

Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Sqeakquel
Friday 4:15 7:25 9:30
Saturday & Sunday 1:15 4:15 7:25 9:30
Monday 1:15 4:15 7:25
Tues thru Thurs 4:15 7:25
Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler
Children, Family • Rated PG

Avatar
Friday 3:55 6:55 10:00
Saturday & Sunday 12:50 3:55 6:55 10:00
Monday 12:50 3:55 6:55
Tues thru Thurs 3:55 6:55
Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

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Critics' choose 'The Hurt Locker' as best picture

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Iraq war drama "The Hurt Locker" and its director took top honors at the Critics' Choice Awards, while Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds" and James Cameron's "Avatar" won the most awards.

Director-producer Kathryn Bigelow was named best director at Friday's ceremony for "Locker," winner of the best picture prize.

Accepting the best picture award, screenwriter-producer Mark Boal said the award belongs to Bigelow "for her singular vision, for her endless inspiration and for never taking no as an answer."

Bigelow had thanked Boal when she accepted the director's honor, saying, "I stand here really because of one man, and that's Mark Boal."

"It's wonderful to have this honor," she continued, "but the recognition should also go to the men and women who are in the field to this day."

"Crazy Heart" was a double winner, with Jeff Bridges claiming the best actor prize for his turn as hard-drinking country singer Bad Blake. The film's theme, "The Weary Kind," won for best song.

"Up" won a pair of prizes, too: Best animated feature and best score.

"Nine," which came into the contest tied with "Basterds" with a leading 10 nominations, ended up winless.

The "Basterds" cast was the critics' pick for best ensemble. The film's villain, Christoph Waltz, was named best supporting actor and Tarantino won for his original screenplay.

"There's really only one group of people to thank," Tarantino said, "and that's the actors who actually took it from the printed page and put it up on the screen. My material is not easy. It's hard. I cannot have dumb actors do my material."

"Avatar" was named best action movie and it collected a heap of technical awards, including honors for cinematography, editing, art direction, sound and visual effects.

There were actually two winners in the actress category, with Meryl Streep and Sandra Bullock tying for the honor.

Streep said she loved playing Julia Child in "Julie & Julia."

"I'm really, really thrilled because I really love what I do," she said. "I love to work, and I love food and I love sex. And so did Julia Child. So it wasn't that much of a stretch."

Bullock, who won for her performance in "The Blind Side," said she hadn't prepared a speech, but she used her time at the microphone to honor her fellow actresses and call for compassion for people who are suffering.

"We're all so lucky to be here tonight when so many others are in pain," she said. "I hope we can all send good love and thoughts and whatever we can."

Jason Reitman, who won best adapted screenplay for "Up in the Air" with co-writer Sheldon Turner, thanked his father, filmmaker Ivan Reitman, calling him "one of the best storytellers I know and ... the person who taught me everything."

"I'm so proud I made this film with you, Dad," he said.

Other honors went to Mo'Nique, who was named best supporting actress for her visceral portrayal of an abusive mother in "Precious"; Saoirse Ronan, who won best young actress for her work in "The Lovely Bones"; and "The Hangover," which was voted best comedy.

"District 9" won for best makeup, "Grey Gardens" was best TV movie and "The Cove" was named best documentary.

Winners are chosen by members of the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the largest such group in North America comprising 200 TV, radio and online film critics.

Bono, Timberlake to perform at Haiti benefit

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—George Clooney says the "Hope for Haiti" benefit for victims of the earthquake in Haiti will include performances from Bono, Sting, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera and Alicia Keys.

Speaking to The Associated Press at the Golden Globes ceremony at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Clooney said that more than 40 celebrities are expected to attend the Jan. 22 event. The actor said the aim of the benefit is "to show the people of Haiti that the whole world is paying attention."

The benefit, which Clooney and Haitian-born singer Wyclef Jean will host, will be broadcast on more than a dozen broadcast and cable networks. It will be held in New York, with CNN's Anderson Cooper chiming in from Haiti.

The show will benefit the Red Cross, UNICEF, Oxfam America, Partners in Health and Jean's Yele Haiti Foundation.

Clooney said that songs from participating artists will also be available on iTunes, with proceeds going to the relief effort.

In this photo provided by StarPix, actors George Clooney and Vera Farmiga pose at the 2010 National Board Of Review Of Motion Pictures Awards Gala in New York, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010.

AP

Lady Gaga goes on talk show after concert canceled

AP

In this publicity image released by Harpo productions, talk show host Oprah Winfrey, right, wears sunglasses and holds a hair bow given to her by Lady Gaga, left, after a live broadcast of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" Friday, Jan. 15, 2010, in Chicago.

CHICAGO (AP)—Pop star Lady Gaga performed on "The Oprah Winfrey Show"—a day after calling off a concert at Purdue University because of an undisclosed illness.

The singer showed no apparent signs of illness as she performed a medley of her hits on the live show Friday. She wore a black outfit studded with spikes and, at one point, swung a gold, spiked ball on a chain into the windshield of a taxi on the stage.

The cancellation was announced from the stage Thursday night after opening acts Jason Derulo and Semi Precious Weapons performed.

A statement released by the school from Lady Gaga's tour management said she'd suffered a sudden illness and that medical personnel had advised her not to perform.

The concert was rescheduled for Jan. 26.

Sheehan leads protest at CIA, Cheney's house

LANGLEY, Va. (AP)—A group led by anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan has protested near the CIA's headquarters and former Vice President Dick Cheney's home in northern Virginia.

They were protesting the use of unmanned drone aircraft to attack al-Qaida and Taliban targets.

The group of about 70 people rallied alongside a highway near the CIA compound Saturday. About half then marched to Cheney's nearby street and stayed for 20 minutes. Police kept them from going down his street.

Sheehan's 21-year-old son Casey was killed in Iraq in April 2004. She staged a prolonged demonstration outside former President George W. Bush's ranch near Crawford, Texas, in 2005.

She says using drones is "cowardly" and "immoral."

Prince William completes helicopter flying course

LONDON (AP)—Prince William has completed an advanced helicopter training course that takes him one step closer to becoming a fully qualified search-and-rescue pilot with Britain's Royal Air Force.

William—second in line to the British throne—graduated Friday at the Defence Helicopter Flying School based at RAF Shawbury, 168 miles (270 kilometers) northwest of London.

His girlfriend Kate Middleton was among those attending the 30-minute graduation ceremony at the airbase, rising to her feet and clapping as William graduated with fellow Royal Air Force students.

His father Prince Charles presented William with his flying badge. William will now begin another flying course at RAF Valley in Wales later this month.

Britain's Prince William, right, shakes hands with his father Prince Charles, after graduating from advance helicopter training, at the Royal Air Force base at Shawbury, England, Friday Jan. 15, 2010.

AP

Medvedev's photo gets $1.7M at charity auction

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP)—President Dmitry Medvedev has outdone his powerful predecessor—as an artist.

A photograph Medvedev took of the kremlin, or fortress, in a Siberian town sold for 51 million rubles ($1.7 million) at a charity auction Saturday night, surpassing the 37 million rubles (then $1.1 million) paid last year for a painting by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

Medvedev's black-and-white photo was snapped up by Mikhail Zingarevich, a board member at Ilim Group, the pulp and paper company where Medvedev once worked as a lawyer. Zingarevich said he planned to hang the 69-by-96-centimeter (27-by-38-inch) picture in his office.

Proceeds of the auction will go to buy furniture for World War II veterans receiving long-promised apartments, equipment for a children's hospital and a new kitchen for an alcohol rehabilitation center.

The annual auction, which includes artwork by Russian politicians, athletes and cultural figures, raised 81.5 million rubles.

Putin, still seen as the more powerful leader two years after passing the presidency to Medvedev, last year donated a painting of a frost-rimmed window in a traditional wooden hut.

Boyfriend's bedside manner gives woman little comfort

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I rent my own apartment and my family lives an hour's drive away. My boyfriend of one year, "Mac," lives about 10 minutes from me and spends the night a few times a week and vice-versa.

I got the flu last month and it developed into bronchitis. I was so sick I could barely drag myself out of bed. I asked Mac to come over and take care of me and he said, "No, I don't want to get sick. I'll come by when you're better."

Abby, if someone cares about you, don't you think he should help out—maybe make some soup, give you water at your bedside and just be there in general? If Mac got sick like that, I would go over and take care of him. But he wasn't willing to do the same. He said he doesn't feel it is "his job."

I am upset by this. Is it an indication of how he would be if we got married?

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

DEAR IN SICKNESS: Yup. It appears Mac isn't the nurturing kind. However, if he has everything else you're looking for in a man, this needn't be a deal breaker. Instead of expecting him to intuit what you need, try telling him what you want. Example: "Send some soup over." "Please empty the trash." "Call an ambulance." You get the idea. If that doesn't do the trick, then scratch Mac.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: One of my bosses insists on using his speakerphone for conversations—business and personal—with his office door wide open. He speaks loudly, and both sides of the conversation can be clearly heard throughout the office. He also walks through the hallways with his cell on speakerphone.

Everyone who works here finds his behavior annoying and boorish. No one says anything, and he doesn't get the message when a chorus of doors slam shut each time he begins one of these calls or walks by with his cell phone blasting. Any ideas on how to address this issue?

UNWILLING THIRD PARTY IN THE NORTHWEST

DEAR UNWILLING: Is no one, including your boss's assistant, close enough to him to tell him that his loud phone conversations are distracting his employees and colleagues and offer to shut his door for him so he can have privacy? Most employers would prefer their workers and colleagues operate at maximum capacity, particularly in this economy.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Please settle a dispute between my wife and me. One of her co-workers, "Cassie," is eight months pregnant and also overweight. My wife saw her and said, "Wow, you've gotten as big as a house!"

Cassie told her she was hurt by the comment. In my wife's opinion, what she said is not uncommon when said to a pregnant woman and she thinks Cassie was overly sensitive. I believe the comment was inappropriate. What do you think?

NEEDS A MEDIATOR, GAINESVILLE, FLA.

DEAR NEEDS A MEDIATOR: I agree with you. No one—pregnant or not—wants to be told she resembles an orca, and your wife should have kept her observation to herself.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

MOM SAID SHE SENT ME UPSTAIRS A MINUTE AGO! THAT MUST'VE BEEN MY DUPLICATE!
WHAT A MESS THIS IS TURNING OUT TO BE!
YOU SAID IT! HE GETS IN TROUBLE, BUT I'M THE ONE WHO GETS BLAMED! WE'D BETTER STRAIGHTEN HIM...
AAUGH!
© 1990 Universal Press Syndicate
1-19
YOUR DUPLICATOR IS A BIG SUCCESS.
OH NO!
ARE YOU KIDDING? IT BURNED OUT AFTER THE FIFTH ONE OF US!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

BEWARE OF DOG
THRILLS GALORE!
YOU MUST BE THIS TALL TO BE BITTEN
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 1-19
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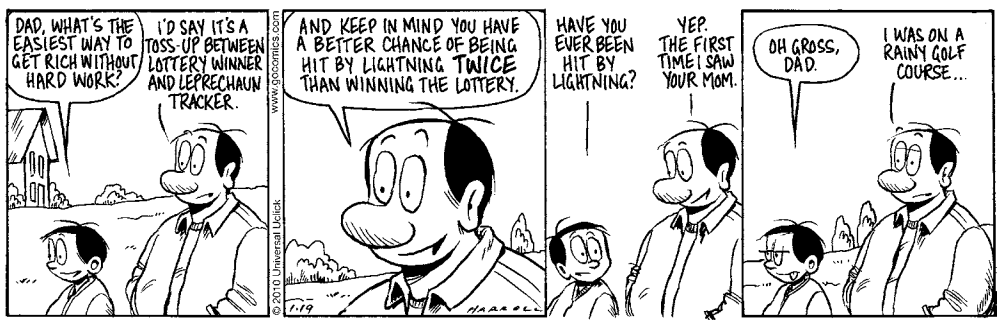
www.garfield.com

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD, WHAT'S THE EASIEST WAY TO GET RICH WITHOUT HARD WORK?
I'D SAY IT'S A TOSS-UP BETWEEN LOTTERY WINNER AND LEPRECHAUN TRACKER.
AND KEEP IN MIND YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF BEING HIT BY LIGHTNING TWICE THAN WINNING THE LOTTERY.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HIT BY LIGHTNING?
YEP. THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOUR MOM.
OH GROSS, DAD.
I WAS ON A RAINY GOLF COURSE...
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www.gocomics.com
1-19
HARROLD

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

DO YOU THINK MY GLASSES MAKES ME LOOK SMARTER?
NOT AS MUCH AS ZIPPING YOUR FLY WOULD.
© 2010 Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Uclick
1-19

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

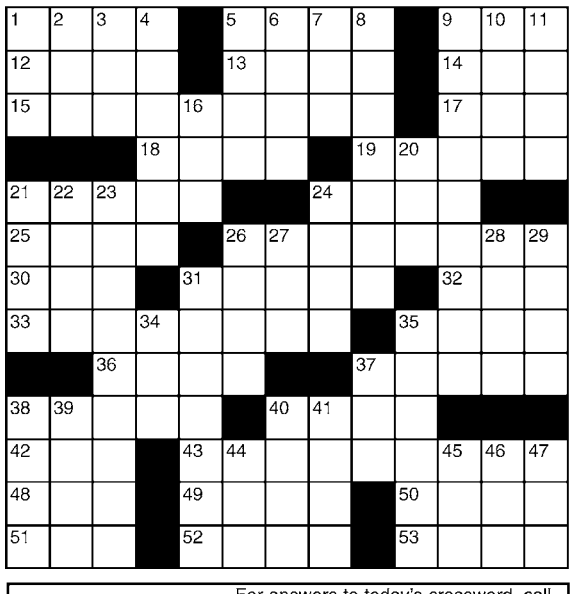
ACROSS
1 Put one's foot down?
5 Level
9 Boston — Party
12 Tittle
13 Staffer
14 Massage
15 Suburban parent, maybe
17 Exist
18 Elbow counterpart
19 Loop in lace
21 Superhero garments
24 Work station
25 Oodles
26 Not to be tossed aside?
30 Chum
31 Bed cover
32 Summertime mo.
33 Cast members
35 As well
36 Covered walkway
37 Sword handles
38 Wan
40 Canaanite's deity
42 Mainlander's memento
43 Wife of a links nut
48 Bobby of hockey
49 Always
50 Protuberance
51 Dine on
52 Pedestal feature
53 Leaves

DOWN
1 A sib
2 Excessively
3 Listending abbr.
4 Small bundle
5 Passenger's payment
6 Rickey flavoring
7 Commotion
8 Storm
9 Part of a mouse, maybe
10 Franc replacement
11 Help in crime
16 Navy rank (Abbr.)
20 "Life — cabaret, ..."
21 Team leader (Abbr.)
22 Winged
23 Pullover garment
24 Union fees
26 Comical Caroline
27 Ending for musket or market
28 Insatiable desire
29 Vanity cases?
31 Mooched
34 Multipurpose truck
35 Under the weather
37 "Hee —"
38 Lotion additive
39 Antitoxins
40 Wasn't colorfast
41 Frizzy hairstyle
44 Eggs
45 "Cock-a-doodle-—!"
46 Rhyming tribute
47 Film director Craven

Solution time: 21 mins.

T	O	E	S	■	D	I	P	■	D	I	E	D
E	I	T	H	E	R	O	R	■	E	R	S	E
A	L	C	A	P	O	N	E	■	B	A	A	L
■	■	■	P	I	P	■	P	L	A	Q	U	E
A	Z	T	E	C	■	P	A	I	R	■	■	■
L	E	E	S	■	A	L	R	O	K	E	R	■
E	T	A	■	A	L	I	E	N	■	L	E	A
■	A	L	U	N	S	E	R	■	S	I	A	M
■	■	■	G	O	O	D	■	A	V	E	R	Y
B	A	Z	A	A	R	■	A	T	E	■	■	■
E	D	E	N	■	A	L	J	O	L	S	O	N
G	I	R	D	■	N	E	A	P	T	I	D	E
S	T	O	A	■	S	I	R	■	E	P	E	E

Yesterday's answer 1-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Trever O'Brien, 26; Jodie Sweetin, 28; Shawn Wayans, 41; Dolly Parton, 64

Happy Birthday: Look outside your usual boundaries and you will find unique solutions to some of the setbacks you encounter this year. Dedication will be the key to getting ahead. A contract with someone you love will lead to a better future and greater security. Live life honestly and you will find peace and contentment. Your numbers are 9, 11, 19, 25, 29, 37, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Observation will spare your making a costly mistake. You should be able to come out ahead if you budget, are thrifty and balance your checkbook. A little romance will help you stabilize an important relationship. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Take control and don't leave anything to chance. You can make great strides if you are confident and act accordingly. An emotional change will occur. Travel and communication can clear up a matter that has concerned you. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You will recognize your true feelings regarding someone you have known for quite some time. Once you know where you stand, you will be able to plan for the future without questioning whether or not you are making the right move. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Use your imagination and offer something unique that will set you apart from any competition you face. A relationship that has suffered problems can be dealt with now if you are firm in the way you discuss the pending issues. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Develop a better relationship with someone you work with or for and you will discover interesting new ways to approach the jobs you are assigned. You can make some extra cash outside of your normal work routine. A love relationship will venture into new territory. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): An open discussion will provide you with plenty to think about and the chance to incorporate something very unique into your plans. An agreement can be made if you network with people who can help you get some of your ideas off the ground. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You need a change of pace. Too many obligations have limited what you can and cannot do. You must ease your stress by passing some of the responsibilities you've taken on to someone else. Cut ties with anyone trying to pressure you. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Look at every angle possible and you can come up with a positive way to get what you want. Don't rely on anyone who is making impossible promises. Your problem-solving skills will lure others into helping you. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Your behavior will make someone you are close to suspicious. Answer any questions honestly or prepare to move on. Greater problems will develop if you make a commitment you don't plan to keep. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Question your feelings and motives before you make a decision or promise someone something you may not want to live up to. A past partner may spark memories you'd like to relive. Take a second look at an old situation before making a life-altering decision. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): It's time to update your look and gear up for new beginnings. An opportunity will arise if you do your best to help someone out. Stability will be a key factor when it comes to getting what you want. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Your emotional outlook will take someone by surprise but, as long as you are happy with what you are doing, you will come out on top. It may be time to part ways with individuals who are not on the same page as you. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are observant, cautious and reserved. You are loyal and empathetic, adaptable and conscientious.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5	8							2
			1			6		
9		6		2	4			5
		3		8			7	6
7								1
2	6			3		8		
3			4	1		2		7
		7			5			
8							3	9

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	2	1	3	9	8	5	7	4
4	3	8	7	1	5	6	9	2
5	7	9	6	4	2	3	1	8
7	5	2	4	6	1	9	8	3
1	6	3	8	5	9	2	4	7
8	9	4	2	3	7	1	5	6
9	8	7	5	2	6	4	3	1
2	4	5	1	7	3	8	6	9
3	1	6	9	8	4	7	2	5

Difficulty Level ★ 1/18

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CHIHUAHUAS **Solution: 8 letters**

W	Y	N	I	T	N	E	D	N	E	P	E	D	I	Y
A	M	I	N	I	N	T	E	L	L	I	G	E	N	T
T	H	I	R	T	E	E	N	N	A	A	B	N	F	I
C	O	M	P	A	N	I	O	N	M	T	O	E	E	L
H	N	Y	D	C	F	S	C	I	L	T	D	T	C	A
D	C	O	B	E	E	E	G	U	E	E	Y	H	T	N
O	O	A	I	R	S	O	F	M	M	N	L	G	I	O
G	A	S	R	T	E	E	P	O	Y	T	N	I	O	S
L	T	K	O	E	C	E	D	A	S	I	N	R	N	R
Y	L	R	R	A	R	E	D	T	D	O	P	F	S	E
C	S	A	R	A	L	N	F	N	E	N	L	P	I	P
U	L	G	M	P	B	L	O	F	T	K	A	I	Y	A
A	O	E	P	S	S	B	U	A	A	N	C	H	D	R
S	N	A	Z	T	E	C	E	F	Y	S	I	O	N	I
T	G	O	D	W	O	H	S	D	E	T	T	O	P	S

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Affection, Amigo, Ancestors, Apple-Domed, Attention, Aztec, Bark, Body, Bonding, Care, Coat, Companion, Dependent, Feisty, Frightened, Full, Good, Graceful, Heat, Infections, Intelligent, Long, Mini, Noisy, Nose, Paris, Personality, Pocket, Saucy, Show Dog, Small, Solid, Span, Spotted, Temperament, Thirteen, Tiny, Toy Breed, Watchdog, Yippy

Yesterday's Answer: Charges

Treasury 7 Send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 postage and handling each ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Universal Uclick, Attn: Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480 Order online at upuzzles.com.

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Dustin Hoffman

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Saipan Tribune

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If interested, please reply and include the following information: contact information; your affiliation with the lease space; RSF available; street address and unit number of lease space; and confirmation that the Lessor/Landlords is willing and able to use the U. S. Government Lease and perform the necessary build out.

Please send the requested information to the following by 5:00PM, January 22, 2010, to USACE, Real Estate, Bldg. 230, Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440 or FAX (808) 438-1328. Send your email responses to Larry.D.Degroot@usace.army.mil. You will be contacted upon receipt of your information.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 6, 2010	Closing Date:	Until Filled		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
10-006	Deputy Director for Water Wastewater	[One Position]	Negotiable; Ungraded	Two-year	Water Wastewater, Saipan

Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 6, 2010	Closing Date:	Wednesday, January 20, 2010		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
10-007	Accounting Technician	[Four Positions]	$15,139 - $17,221	Two-year	Customer Serv., Billing, Credit & Coll., Saipan
10-008	Trades Assistant	[Two Positions]	$11,036 -12,692	Two-year	Water , Rota
10-009	Information Technology (IT) Analyst	[Two Positions]	$34,176 - $37,593	Two-year	IT, Saipan
10-010*	Information Technology (IT) Specialist	[One Position]	$19,425 - $21, 610	Two-year	IT, Saipan

** This is a re-announcement of JVA 09-023. All applicants of 09-023 will be included in 10-010.*

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
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• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

H (DUST) FF

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Find today's solution in this section

Favre, Viking defense rough up Romo, Cowboys

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—This is why Brett Favre said he was coming back. And back he is—maybe better than ever. Four—count 'em, four—touchdown passes from Minnesota's 40-year-old quarterback put the Vikings within a game of the Super Bowl with a 34-3 rout of the Dallas Cowboys to advance to the NFC championship Sunday.

"Probably the most fatigued I got today was celebrating," Favre said, smiling.

The Vikings (13-4) will take on the Saints next Sunday at New Orleans, with the winner going to the NFL title game—Favre's season-long goal and the reason he came out of retirement for a second straight season.

"Today was like this season—it's been wonderful," Favre said. Asked if it was an emotional game for him, he said, "I'm kind of worn out right now, but it is. It was emotional before the game."

Favre found Sidney Rice for three scores and Ray Edwards led the defense's harassment of Tony Romo. Then he put an exclamation point on the game late in the fourth quarter when he hit Visanthe Shiancoe for his personal playoff-best fourth TD pass.

Never in 22 previous postseason games had he thrown for that many touchdowns. And never before had he beaten Dallas in the playoffs. Favre completed 15 of 24 passes for 234 yards to finally do it.

Meanwhile, Romo sat stone-faced on the bench between possessions in the second half after a three-turnover game against one of his childhood favorites.

Romo was sacked six times, three by Edwards, lost two of his three fumbles and threw a glaring interception right to Ben Leber deep in his own end late in the third quarter to set up a field goal. After gaining 118 yards in the first quarter, the Cowboys got only 130 the rest of the way and watched the buzz from their first playoff win in 13 years last week fizzle out.

"It's like the elevator falling from the top. It's tough when it's over. If you don't win it all, you have not reached your goal," coach Wade Phillips said.

Romo finished 22 for 35 for 198 yards, but for all the strides he made this season his lack of poise in the din of the Metrodome will be remembered well. The last time Dallas won a playoff game on the road was the NFC championship after the 1992 season.

Favre had a remarkable regular season with a career-low interception total of seven and 33 touchdown passes that pushed the Vikings to their best finish in 11 years. They won their division last season, too, so this return to the playoffs was irrelevant.

The once-unfathomable partnership was formed just for this, a talented team hoping to hitch those title hopes to Favre, who was driven to disprove the doubts about his ability to get back to the big game again.

"It was everything I thought it would be throughout this year and then some," Favre said.

He took some hard hits by Dallas and that fierce front seven, but he was as sharp as he was all season. Stepping up in the pocket to elude the rush and making the right reads downfield, Favre looked the part of the missing Super Bowl piece the Vikings were searching for when they persuaded him to join them last summer.

"He's playing his heart out," defensive end Jared Allen said.

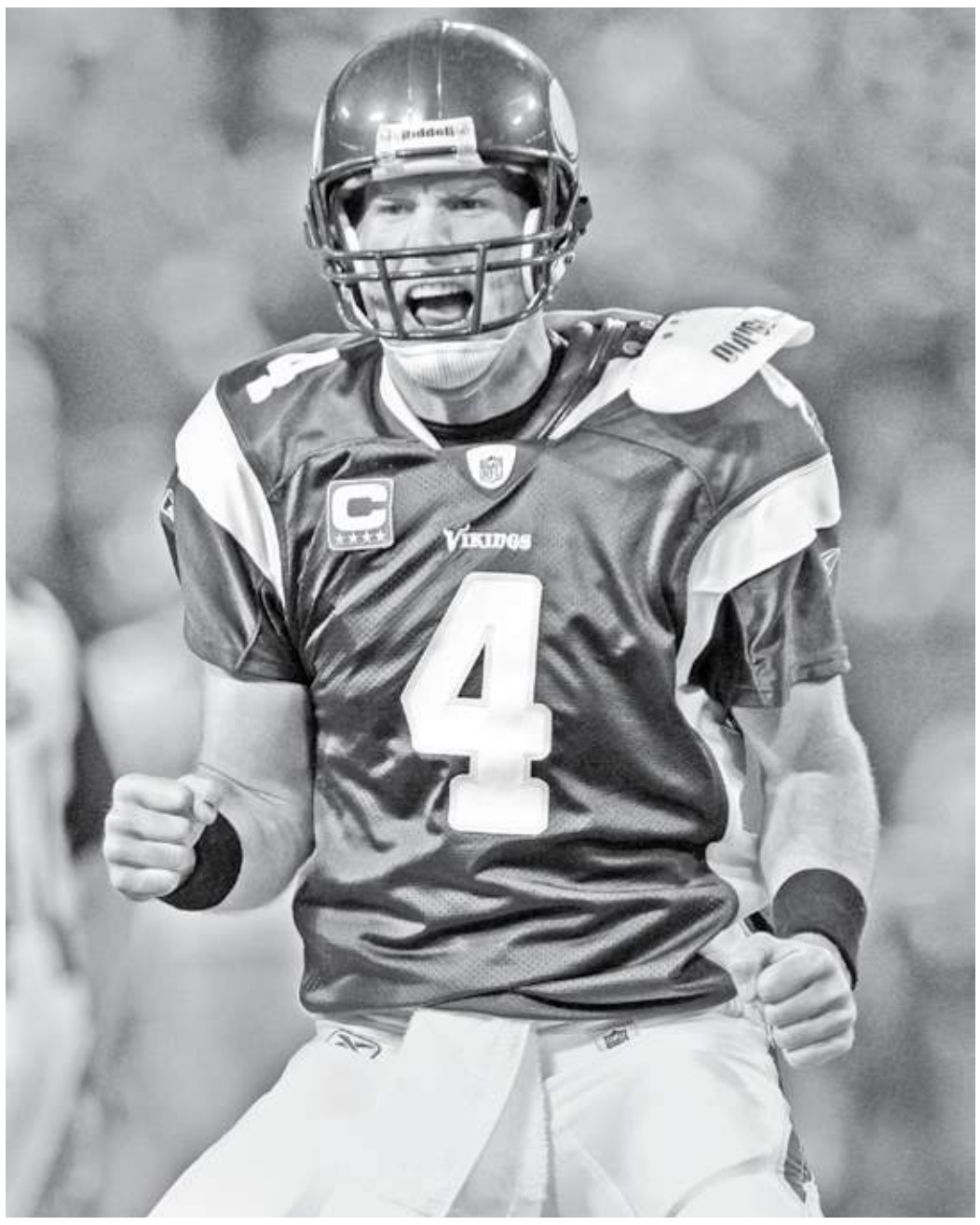
After a 35-yard heave to Rice midway through the fourth quarter that stretched the lead to 27-3, Favre ran up to right guard Anthony Herrera and jumped on his back while the fans enjoyed the frenzy.

The Vikings, who had last week off while the Cowboys whipped Philadelphia, were bothered by all the people picking Dallas to win.

"The Tasmanian devils were coming from Dallas that were about to bombard the state of Minnesota and run through us like Sherman through the South," coach Brad Childress said, exaggerating popular opinion about this game. "All of us felt it quite palpably."

The Vikings played Dallas only three times in the last decade, hardly rivalry material, but fans in Minnesota have plenty of contempt for the Cowboys. Favre brought his own history of defeat, though scattered and distant, against them with three straight postseason losses early in his career.

It was football's original "Hail Mary" heave in 1975 that sent Dallas one step toward the Super Bowl and left another stinging loss with Bud Grant's bridesmaid Vikings, who believed Drew Pearson was guilty of pass interference on the play. Oh, and don't forget another dubious Dallas-Minnesota link, the ill-fated Herschel Walker trade that fueled the '90s dynasty built by the Cowboys.



AP

Minnesota Vikings' Brett Favre (4) celebrates after throwing a 47-yard touchdown pass to Sidney Rice during the first half of an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Dallas Cowboys Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, in Minneapolis

Jets 17, Chargers 14

At San Diego, maybe Rex Ryan already knows the score of the AFC championship game, too.

The rookie coach who, at one point, didn't know his Jets were still in playoff contention, then declared them Super Bowl favorites, will need some more bold predictions.

His Jets are still playing.

Rookies Mark Sanchez and Shonn Greene led New York to a stunning 17-14 upset of San Diego in the divisional playoffs Sunday, each providing a touchdown in the fourth quarter that marked another Chargers postseason pratfall.

"It's a big win for our franchise," Sanchez said, "and we're not done."

Sanchez threw a go-ahead, 2-yard touchdown pass to tight end Dustin Keller three plays into the fourth quarter, then Greene gave the Jets some breathing room with a 53-yard scoring run on their next possession.

The upstart Jets (11-7), who have won seven of their last eight, advanced to the AFC championship game for the first time since 1999. They'll play at top-seeded Indianapolis next Sunday.

"A matchup that probably nobody wanted, but too bad," Ryan said. "Here we come!"

Of course, it was the Colts who pulled Peyton Manning and other starters in the second half of their Week 16 game against the Jets, who rallied for a victory that put them in control of their playoff destiny.

Before that game, Ryan said his holiday wish was for the Colts to rest Manning & Co.

"I don't know if Santa Claus will be that good to me again," Ryan said. "But I will say that I'd like to see Peyton Manning not play this week."

After the Jets finally did clinch a playoff spot by routing Cincinnati the following week, Ryan, their rookie head coach, created a postseason itinerary for his players that included the Super Bowl in Miami followed by a parade two days later.

He might be onto something.

Maybe this week he'll predict the Jets' opponent in the Super Bowl.

"We believed the whole time, the whole year, when it probably wasn't the popular choice," Ryan said. "We don't have to apologize to anyone."

The Chargers let New York hang around long enough, and the Jets finally got out of their own way, becoming the only road team to win in the divisional round.

After Philip Rivers scored on a 1-yard sneak with 2:14 left to pull the Chargers within three, the Jets recovered the onside kick.

Facing a fourth-and-1 from the 29 with 1:09 left, the Jets called timeout. Ryan decided to go for it and Thomas Jones bulled through the Chargers' line for 2 yards.

Sanchez pumped his fist and pointed his hand forward in the first-down signal.

On the sideline, Ryan lifted much smaller offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer off the ground in a bear hug.

The Chargers (13-4) not only saw their 11-game winning streak end, but suffered yet another playoff meltdown after earning the AFC's No. 2 seed.

"You'd like to play your best games in January in games like this, and certainly, for whatever reason, we did not do that today," Chargers coach Norv Turner said.

Sanchez, playing in his native Southern California, went from looking like the rookie that he is to a guy who has now has two straight playoff wins on the road. He was intercepted by Quentin Jammer midway through the third quarter, but the Jets got the ball back on an interception when the ball ricocheted off Vincent Jackson and into the hands of cornerback Darrelle Revis as both were sprawled on the ground.

The Jets weren't able to capitalize on that pickoff, but Rivers' second interception was costly. On second-and-9 from his 5, Rivers underthrew Antonio Gates, who hadn't even turned around, with safety Jim Leonhard intercepting and returning it to the 16.

On third down, Sanchez rolled right and threw to Keller, who shed linebacker Tim Dobbins in the back corner of the end zone and made a sprawling 2-yard catch that put the Jets ahead 10-7.

Sanchez and the rest of the Jets ran over to congratulate Keller, then the rookie QB kept running to the bench, stopping once to celebrate with a teammate.

The Jets turned to their top-ranked running game on their next drive, and Greene, a third-round pick from Iowa, broke his long scoring run up the middle, running over safety Eric Weddle in the process.

"Once I got to the secondary, I had one tackle to break and I did, and it was off to the end zone," Greene said. "A lot of people didn't know about me, but they know about the Jets."

'Melo, Billups lead Nuggets past Jazz

DENVER (AP)—Carmelo Anthony scored 37 points and Chauncey Billups added 29 in the Denver Nuggets' 119-112 win over Utah that snapped the Jazz' four-game winning streak Sunday.

Ty Lawson returned to Denver's rotation after missing four games with a sprained ankle and helped steady a sometimes erratic offense, scoring 11 points with an assist.

Nene added 18 points for the Nuggets, who improved to 3-0 against Utah and won the season series. That could prove crucial for playoff seeding should these teams end up with the same record in the tight Western Conference.

Point guard Deron Williams (sprained wrist) and forward Andrei Kirilenko (hyperextended knee) were both in Utah's starting lineup despite playing the night before in a 112-95 win over Milwaukee in Salt Lake City. Williams led the Jazz with 23 points but Kirilenko scored just 7.

Raptors 110, Mavericks 88

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 23 points and 13 rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani scored 22 as Toronto won its seventh in eight home games to reach the midpoint of its season at 21-20.

Jose Calderon had 15 points and Jarrett Jack scored 11 as the Raptors took the lead with a huge second quarter and never trailed again, leading by as many as 26.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 19 points and Jason Terry had 18 for the Mavericks, who have lost three of four. Shawn Marion scored 15 and Jason Kidd had 12 points and nine assists.

Palmer's birdie gives him Sony title

HONOLULU (AP)—Ryan Palmer made a 50-foot chip shot on the final hole that hit the pin and left him a tap-in for birdie and a one-shot victory over Robert Allenby in the Sony Open on Sunday.

Palmer, locked in a duel with Australia's Allenby to the very end at Waialae, came up short of the green on the par-5 18th and faced a delicate chip. Allenby went over the green and pitched to just inside 10 feet.

Palmer thought his chip was a little too hard, and he tumbled backward in relief when the ball struck the pin squarely. Allenby missed his birdie putt, and Palmer tapped in for a 4-under 66 and his third career PGA Tour victory.

"Lucky bounce," Palmer said. "It was probably going to go by 7 or 8 feet. I still hit a good chip. You need things like that to win."

The victory gave made the 33-year-old Texan exempt on the PGA Tour through 2012, and earned him a trip back to the Masters for the first time in five years.

Allenby was trying to win his third consecutive tournament on three tours, a feat believed to have never been accomplished, and he gave himself every chance. He played bogey-free on the back nine, but he needed one more birdie. His second shot out of the rough on the 18th came out hot and over the green, and he did well to give himself a realistic chance at birdie and a playoff.

Allenby, who won the Nedbank Challenge on the Sunshine Tour and the Australian PGA Championship on the Australasian PGA Tour at the end of last year, closed with a 67.

"I had a couple of chances out there," Allenby said. "It's so easy to look back and say, 'I could have made that, I could have made that.' But at the end of the day, realistically, I needed to make a birdie at the last."

Palmer finished at 15-under 265 and earned $990,000.

Steve Stricker, who also shared the lead briefly on the back nine, had a 65 to finish third, two strokes back. Two-time U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen of South Africa closed with a 62 and was atop the leaderboard as Palmer and Allenby were making the turn, although his 12-under 268 never looked as though it would be enough.

Palmer went wire-to-wire, which he can attribute to an article he read early in the week about defending champion Zach Johnson and his strategy of not thinking beyond the shot in front of him. Palmer tried to treat each day as though he were starting over, and he wound up with a great start to his season.

Palmer and Allenby figured as long as they shot under par, it would take a great round for anyone to catch them. That came from Goosen, although he started too far behind (seven shots) and failed to birdie the 18th, settling for a tournament-best 62.

About the time Goosen finished, Stricker hit a hybrid from the grassy collar of a bunker onto the par-5 ninth green for a birdie, then hit a good pitch to 3 1/2 feet on the 10th to join Goosen at 12 under. With so many holes left, and Palmer and Allenby behind him, it turned into a three-man race over the final two hours.

Stricker certainly had his chances, although it was an example that even one of the best putters in golf doesn't make everything. He lipped out a 5-foot birdie chance on the 12th and missed from 8 feet on the 14th. He also holed a birdie putt on the 13th that briefly put him in a tie for the lead, and a 25-footer on the 17th that kept alive his hopes.

But he found a bunker on the 18th, and Waialae sand makes it tough to get spin on the ball. His long bunker shot went 20 feet long and high of the hole, and Stricker's birdie putt to join the leaders grazed the edge of the cup.

Allenby might have saved his chances early in the round. He had a sloppy three-putt on the fourth, then went through the green on the fifth with a sand wedge. His chip came out hot and ran 15 feet by the hole, and Allenby was so disgusted he kicked at the ground—with his left ankle, at least—but then holed the par putt.

Palmer's volatility came with his scores. He had a one-shot lead going to the back nine, then didn't make a par until he missed an 8-foot birdie putt on the 15th hole. He birdied the 10th, 12th and 14th, all from inside 12 feet. He bogeyed the 11th and 13th from bunkers.

Allenby caught him again with a tough shot inside 3 feet on the 15th, and the duel was on.

Charles Howell III ended a stretch of 17 tournaments without a top 10 with a 66-64 weekend to tie for fifth with Carl Petterson (66) and Davis Love III, who holed out for eagle from the 16th fairway and closed with a 67.

Johnson, the defending champion and among those three shots back going into the final round, got off to another sluggish start and didn't have enough holes to recover. Three straight birdies led to a 70.

AP

Ryan Palmer holds the trophy after winning the Sony Open golf tournament Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, in Honolulu.

Sharapova out; Safina wins at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Maria Sharapova tumbled out of the Australian Open on Monday in her worst performance at a Grand Slam event since 2003, falling 7-6 (4), 3-6, 6-4 to Maria Kirilenko in the first round.

The 14th-seeded Sharapova was unable to defend her 2008 Australian Open championship while sidelined 10 months because of right shoulder surgery. She then failed to advance beyond the quarterfinals in the other three majors last year.

The loss to fellow Russian Kirilenko was her earliest exit at a major since her first-round loss at the 2003 French Open.

"Just didn't win the match ... bottom line," said Sharapova, summing up the match in a matter-of-fact manner. "Certainly had my chances and just didn't execute.

"I felt like I was—when she was up and then I'd get back there, back in the game—I just didn't take advantage of that and let her ... control the situation again."

Kirilenko, whose best run at a major was to the fourth round in Melbourne two years ago, put her fingers to her lips late in the match to remind herself to remain composed, not to silence a crowd that sensed an upset.

"Normally, it was for me actually, that everything is calm," she said of the gesture. "Because of course it's a great win, but it's only the first round I pass. It's nothing big actually."

Russia's two highest-ranked women advanced in straight sets, with second-seeded Dinara Safina beating Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova 6-4, 6-4 in the first match completed on a rainy day at Melbourne Park, and No. 3 Svetlana Kuznetsova beating Anastasia Rodionova of Australia 6-1, 6-2.

Safina lost the final to Serena Williams last year.

Kim Clijsters played on Rod Laver Arena immediately after Sharapova's loss and needed less than an hour to beat Valerie Tetreault of Canada 6-0, 6-4.

Clijsters won the U.S. Open in September in her third tournament back from time off after getting married and having a baby.

Yanina Wickmayer, another Belgian making a comeback of sorts, has had an almost agonizing route the second round. Wickmayer held off Alexandra Dulgheru 1-6, 7-5, 10-8.

Despite her No. 16 ranking, Wickmayer had to qualify for the event because she was subject to a suspension—later overturned—for violating the World Anti-Doping Agency's "whereabouts rule" when confirmations for the season's first major closed.

Andy Roddick sat through a needless rain suspension before beating Thiemo de Bakker of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

The match at Hisense Arena, the tournament's second covered court, was suspended at 2-2 in second set so that organizers could close the roof, which had been opened despite rain in the area.

No. 5 Andy Murray had no such trouble on the main court later Monday, although the British player encountered different conditions to what he expected in a 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 win over South Africa's Kevin Anderson.

"Little bit weird playing under the roof here—first time I've done it," he said.

In between rain delays on outside courts, Croatia's Ivo Karlovic ousted No. 13 Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic 2-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 in a first-round match that finished more than seven hours after it had been due to start.

Elsewhere, No. 11-seeded Fernando Gonzalez of Chile beat Olivier Rochus of Belgium 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, Florian Mayer beat Philipp Petzschner 0-6, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 6-2 and American Wayne Odesnik had ousted Slovenian qualifier Blaz Kavcic 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

No. 24 Ivan Ljubicic had a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win over 16-year-old wild-card entry Jason Kubler, the youngest player in the draw.

On the women's side, No. 12 Flavia Pennetta of Italy beat Russian Anna Chakvetadze 6-3, 3-6, 6-2, while No. 24 Maria Jose Martinez of Spain, No. 30 Kateryna Bondarenko of Ukraine, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia all advanced along with Zheng Jie, who beat Peng Shuai 0-6, 6-1, 6-2 in an all-China match.

Sharapova kept going for winners despite twice being only two points away from losing the match. She ended up with 72 unforced errors and 11 double-faults.

The Marias, both Russian and both 22, clubbed 71 winners and made 110 unforced errors between them as they traded heavy ground strokes in a match that lasted 3 hours, 22 minutes and allowed the No. 58-ranked Kirilenko to even their four career head-to-head matches.

The crowd favored Kirilenko but a few voices chimed in to support Sharapova, or express exasperation. "Come ON Sharapova," one shouted after the three-time major winner chased down a forehand but returned it to the net.

The former No. 1-ranked Sharapova rallied from 2-5 down in the deciding set, holding serve and then breaking Kirilenko to stay in the match. She dropped her own serve after giving Kirilenko double match point, though, her last forehand landing out.

"It's never easy. I'm good friends with Maria," Kirilenko said, but "I tried my best to win today—I came here quite confident."

Police were busy despite the rain, ejecting 11 people from Melbourne Park for disruptive behavior and smuggling flares onto the grounds.

In another incident, police said a group of Croatian supporters were denied entry to the grounds Monday after setting off a flare.

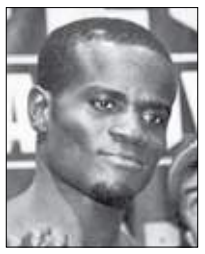
Underdog Clottey 'ready to shock world'

BOXING

MANILA, Philippines—The spanking Cowboys Stadium is all set to host the initial press conference for the year's first big boxing bout pitting Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao against dangerous welterweight Joshua Clottey on March 13 in Arlington, Texas.

A report by the Examiner.com revealed that a 60-foot stage is being erected in the middle of the field of the Cowboys Stadium where the press conference will be staged on Jan. 18 (Jan. 19 in Manila).

Manny Pacquiao, the reigning WBO welterweight champion, left Manila last night for Los Angeles. He is expected to arrive there tomorrow before being whisked to Arlington.


Clottey

Pacquiao is also set to sign the fight contract on arrival in Dallas. Clottey told Fan IQ News (Faniq.com) that he had already affixed his signature to the bout and assured that all the details will be ironed out soonest.

"I'm ready to shock the world," Clottey said.

"You know me, I always come to do my job in the ring. I can handle southpaws well and I will beat Pacquiao."

Pacquiao left the country bearing the good news of having been tested negative by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for performance-enhancing drugs, further boosting his libel suit against the camp of Floyd Mayweather Jr., who accused Pacquiao of using steroids.

The accusation keyed the downfall of the supposed megabout with Mayweather. ***(PDI)***

PERCY

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Omechelang in the finals and the latter prevailed, 179-131.

In the finals, Castro threatened to pull off an upset against the top finisher Omechelang when the former took Game 1, 186-177. However, Omechelang saved his best for last, knocking down 207 pins in the deciding Game 2 to win the King of the Lanes title. Castro also notched 175 pinfalls for a total of 361, pins 23 short off Omechelang's two-game total of 384.

Omechelang said this was the first time in six years that he won the King of the Lanes crown. He said he had claimed multiple monthly titles in the past, but always fell short in winning the coveted award. In 2008, Omechelang made it to the stepladder finals, but was booted out by Ador Dimaano in the first round.

SBA's season-finale roll-off for the men's division was opened for the Top 36 players who made it to the club's ranking system and those who competed in at least five monthly roll-offs.

Twenty-seven qualified, but only 16 played in the weekend roll-off. Top-ranked Raymond Zapanta, who beat Omechelang (1,436 points) in the ranking system with his 1,578 points, finished only seventh in the nine-game qualifier with his 1,593 pinfalls. 2008 champion Raymond Angeles, who was seventh in the rankings, was a step short of qualifying into the stepladder finals. He finished fourth with 1,665 pinfalls.

Simon Manacop, Robert Talavera, and Raul Dumapit, who occupied the third to fifth place in the ranking system, failed to wound up in the Top 5 in the qualifying roll-off. Talavera was only sixth in the qualifier with his 1,642, while Manacop and Dumapit ranked eighth and ninth, respectively with 1,582 and 1,524 pinfalls.

Other keglers who joined the season-finale tournament were Ruselle Zapanta (1,663), Nick Gutierrez (1,521), Dannie Robles (1,509), Soledad (1,500), Lito Teodoro (1,473), Jared Gutierrez (1,435), Chester Bai (1,312), and Ben Aizon (1,196).

SAKISAT

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The victory put Chura in a tie for fourth place with SaiPal. Natibu leads the league with a clean 6-0 record, followed by Island Rebels (5-0) and Man Amigos (6-1). San Roque dropped to a 3-2 mark for sixth place in the team standings in the 21-squad league.

The Chura-San Roque tiff was tied, 5-all, after three complete innings when a nine-run top of the fourth allowed Chura to pull ahead and never looked back.

Wally Emul Jr. led San Roque's cause, going 3-for-3 at bat and making three RBIs and three runs. His round-tripper at the bottom of the last inning sparked a San Roque rally, but still it was not enough to help them steal the win.

Hitz 6, Lancheros 5

In a low-scoring game, Hitz halted Lancheros rally to pull off a 6-5 win.

Hitz improved to a 4-3 mark, while Lancheros absorbed their fifth loss in six games.

Pitcher Ben Somol and the Hitz defense gave up only one run to Lancheros in the first five innings to take a 6-1 lead.

Jack Diaz and Ray Camacho's two-run single each in the sixth and seventh inning, respectively, moved Lancheros within one, but that was the closest they could get.

After Camacho's two-RBI single at the bottom of the seventh inning and still no outs, Hitz had seen enough and tightened up its defense in the next three plays to preserve the win.

Outfielder Mario Fitial caught Leonard Camacho's fly ball for the first out, Somol struck out Jack Reyes, and shortstop Kyle Kaipat caught another fly ball.

Ur Balls 18, 6-Pack 6

In the second game of the night, Ur Balls shut out 6-Pack in the first three innings en route to an easy 18-6 triumph.

Ur Balls posted the win, their fourth in six games, after only six innings, as a 10-run top of the second inning gave them control of the match. Left fielder Giovanni Ayuyu led Ur Balls' rally in the second inning, making a two-run homer, while Joe Lizama, George Camacho, and John Pangelinan added one RBI each.

6-Pack finally broke into the scoreboard at the bottom of the fourth, reaching home plate twice on Ur Balls errors, but still the latter were way ahead, 15-2.

The loss snapped 6-Pack's two-game winning run, dropping the team to a 4-3 mark for a share of 10th place with its tormentor.

NMASA

From Page 28

In NMASA's previous meetings, several sports associations have expressed their interests in sending teams to Palau in August. The list include basketball, athletics, swimming, baseball, lawn tennis, table tennis, and canoe.

NMASA had already made a payment scheme for teams going to Palau and the first of the four installment fees are due early next month.

The cost for the Palau trip per person is $950. NMASA will shoulder $200 of the total cost, leaving athletes/teams to foot the remaining $750. The $750 will be divided into four payments. Each athlete or official going to Palau for the Micronesian Games will pay $175 for four months, starting in February.

White said during NMASA's meeting early this month that athletes/officials who will make the first installment payment next month will give NMASA a cue on how many athletes/officials are really keen on being part of Team CNMI to the Micronesian Games.

PILCOWA

From Page 28

open division were left in the schedule for the regular season, but teams involved agreed not to play so they can proceed to the playoffs, which will start on Thursday.

Pennant champion Diamond Ali'i was set to collide against IT&E on Saturday, but it rained even before the match had started. Both teams agreed not to play as results of the game will no longer have a bearing on their standings. Diamond gets to keep the No. 1 spot with its 6-1 record, while IT&E will take the No. 3 spot.

Saipan Fresh was scheduled to meet New City International Construction in the last game in the regular season tonight, but the former had earlier informed organizers it is forfeiting the match,

With the loss, Saipan Fresh dropped to a 3-5 record for the No. 4 spot and will duel Diamond in the first round of the playoffs on Thursday. IT&E and second placer Noni Saipan (5-3) will slug it out this Saturday in the other pairing in the first round of the playoffs.

Winners in the first round will battle for the first finals seat next week, while losers must win their next match to remain in contention. The team to lose two games will be booted out in the tournament and join NCIC (1-7) in vacation.

In the masters division, things are a bit complicated.

Pennant champion Ebisuya and second placer University of Loyola are in the playoffs. GEC Pawnshop is also on the list, but has yet to determine its place in the four-team playoffs. The last playoff qualifier has yet to be decided due to technicalities.

In the current, but unofficial team standings, Wushin Corp. ended the regular season with a 3-5 record. Cool Water finished fifth with its 2-6 slate after forfeiting its Saturday game against GEC.

Wushin should have notched the fourth and final playoff ticket with its better record than Cool Water. However, Cool Water planned to protest two of Wushin's victories, as the former claimed the latter fielded an ineligible player (under age) in those wins. The PILCOWA caging is only for players in the 37-and-above age group.

League coordinator Pando Muleta said Cool Water have until today to formally file a protest or the committee will make the final decision tomorrow. Pending this decision, the pairings in the first round of the playoffs in the masters division have yet to be determined.

UBA wait-and-see mode

Besides the PILCOWA caging, the 2009 UBA/Miller Lite Men's Basketball League at the Garapan Basketball Court has been also affected by rain hitting the island since last week.

The continuation of the playoff match between Noni Saipan-Diamond on Sunday was called off due to rain. The match was originally set for Friday, but was halted by rain with less than seven minutes left in the second quarter.

Last night, Noni and Diamond was set to resume their duel in the first game, while Advance and Prospects were to collide in the semifinals in the second match. UBA president James Lee said if theses games will be rained-out anew, they will reset the Noni-Diamond tiff today and will move the Advance-Prospects semis encounter on Wednesday.

"We are praying for the rain to stop so we can proceed with our games," Lee said.

The winner of the Noni-Diamond meeting will face the well-rested Ol'Aces in the other semifinals pairing.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	11	.711	–
Toronto	21	20	.512	7 1/2
New York	16	24	.400	12
Philadelphia	13	26	.333	14 1/2
New Jersey	3	36	.077	24 1/2

Southeast Division

Atlanta	26	13	.667	–
Orlando	26	14	.650	1/2
Miami	20	19	.513	6
Charlotte	19	19	.500	6 1/2
Washington	13	26	.333	13

Central Division

Cleveland	31	11	.738	–
Chicago	18	20	.474	11
Milwaukee	16	22	.421	13
Detroit	14	25	.359	15 1/2
Indiana	14	26	.350	16

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	26	14	.650	–
San Antonio	24	15	.615	1 1/2
Houston	22	18	.550	4
Memphis	21	18	.538	4 1/2
New Orleans	21	18	.538	4 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	26	14	.650	–
Portland	25	16	.610	1 1/2
Utah	23	18	.561	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	22	18	.550	4
Minnesota	8	33	.195	18 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	31	9	.775	–
Phoenix	24	17	.585	7 1/2
L.A. Clippers	17	22	.436	13 1/2
Sacramento	15	24	.385	15 1/2
Golden State	11	27	.289	19

Yesterday's Games
Toronto 110, Dallas 88
Denver 119, Utah 112

SONY OPEN SCORES

HONOLULU (AP) – Scores Sunday from the Sony Open, a $5.5 million US PGA Tour event at 7,044-yard, par-70 Waialae Country Club (FedExCup points in parentheses):

FINAL ROUND

Ryan Palmer (500), $990,000	65-66-68-66–265
Robert Allenby (300), $594,000	65-67-67-67–266
Steve Stricker (190), $374,000	66-67-69-65–267
Retief Goosen (135), $264,000	69-67-70-62–268
Charles Howell III (100), $200,750	73-66-66-64–269
Carl Pettersson (100), $200,750	66-70-67-66–269
Davis Love III (100), $200,750	65-69-68-67–269
Omar Uresti (78), $154,000	70-68-68-65–271
John Rollins (78), $154,000	70-69-67-65–271
Chad Campbell (78), $154,000	68-64-73-66–271
Nathan Green (78), $154,000	71-67-65-68–271
Justin Rose (60), $111,375	72-65-71-64–272
Ernie Els (60), $111,375	69-70-67-66–272
Briny Baird (60), $111,375	69-71-64-68–272
Zach Johnson (60), $111,375	65-67-70-70–272
Stephen Ames (54), $85,250	68-67-72-66–273
Dustin Johnson (54), $85,250	70-69-67-67–273
Chad Collins (54), $85,250	69-68-67-69–273
Tom Lehman (54), $85,250	66-69-68-70–273
Jason Dufner (49), $61,820	69-72-69-64–274
Marc Leishman (49), $61,820	69-69-70-66–274
Mark Wilson (49), $61,820	68-67-71-68–274
Troy Merritt (49), $61,820	65-71-70-68–274
Jeff Quinney (49), $61,820	66-67-72-69–274
Brian Stuard (40), $35,436	66-73-70-66–275
Tom Gillis (40), $35,436	71-68-70-66–275
Spencer Levin (40), $35,436	69-71-68-67–275
Angel Cabrera (40), $35,436	66-68-73-68–275
Brian Gay (40), $35,436	68-69-70-68–275
Blake Adams (40), $35,436	69-67-71-68–275
Nick O'Hern (40), $35,436	71-69-67-68–275
Tim Clark (40), $35,436	71-67-68-69–275
John Merrick (40), $35,436	65-68-72-70–275
Shane Bertsch (40), $35,436	66-68-71-70–275
WC Liang (0), $35,436	68-68-69-70–275
Graham DeLaet (40), $35,436	69-67-68-71–275
Michael Allen (40), $35,436	67-68-68-72–275
Troy Matteson (40), $35,436	67-67-68-73–275
Kevin Johnson (31), $23,100	68-71-70-67–276
K.J. Choi (31), $23,100	71-70-67-68–276
Paul Goydos (31), $23,100	72-63-69-72–276
Rory Sabbatini (31), $23,100	68-68-67-73–276
Ryuji Imada (27), $19,250	68-72-70-67–277
David Toms (27), $19,250	70-69-70-68–277
Dean Wilson (27), $19,250	71-67-69-70–277
Chris Tidland (23), $14,960	69-68-72-69–278
Bubba Watson (23), $14,960	69-70-69-70–278
Y.E. Yang (23), $14,960	70-69-69-70–278
Richard S. Johnson (23), $14,960	71-70-67-70–278
Joe Ogilvie (23), $14,960	69-71-67-71–278
Pat Perez (23), $14,960	66-70-69-73–278
Stewart Cink (16), $12,697	68-72-70-69–279
Corey Pavin (16), $12,697	71-67-71-70–279
Vijay Singh (16), $12,697	69-72-68-70–279
Kevin Na (16), $12,697	73-68-68-70–279
Mark Calcavecchia (16), $12,697	71-68-69-71–279
Roger Tambellini (16), $12,697	66-69-72-72–279
Boo Weekley (16), $12,697	71-68-68-72–279
David Lutterus (11), $12,100	73-67-70-70–280
Martin Flores (11), $12,100	66-74-69-71–280
Jeff Klauk (11), $12,100	70-68-68-74–280
Rich Barcelo (9), $11,825	70-71-69-71–281
Ricky Barnes (9), $11,825	67-69-70-75–281
Brian Davis (6), $11,495	70-69-70-73–282
Woody Austin (6), $11,495	70-69-70-73–282
Jason Day (6), $11,495	73-67-69-73–282
Henrik Bjornstad (6), $11,495	71-68-68-75–282
Jim Carter (3), $11,165	71-70-69-73–283
Ryuichi Oda (0), $11,165	68-72-69-74–283
Jeff Maggert (1), $10,945	73-66-71-75–285
Bob Estes (1), $10,945	68-70-69-78–285

Made Cut, DNF

Alex Prugh (1), $10,615	74-67-70–211
Aaron Goldberg (0), $10,615	70-71-70–211
Jonathan Byrd (1), $10,615	75-64-72–211
Sean O'Hair (1), $10,615	68-69-74–211
Jerod Turner (1), $10,340	71-69-72–212
Fredrik Jacobson (1), $10,120	70-71-72–213
Ben Curtis (1), $10,120	70-69-74–213
Webb Simpson (1), $10,120	71-68-74–213
Kevin Hayashi (0), $9,900	74-67-75–216

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Natibu	6	0
Island Rebels	5	0
Man Amigos	6	1
SaiPal	5	1
Chura	5	1
San Roque	3	2
Freedom Air Flyers	4	2
Ur Balls	4	2
6-Pack	4	3
Hitz	4	3
Calikano-Falcons	3	3
Blazers	2	3
Red Eye	2	4
G-Ballers	2	4
Berdax	1	3
Team Familia	1	4
Go For Broke	2	5
Lancheros	1	5
Team Fuegu	1	5
Ramblers	1	6
X-Terminators	0	5

2009 Bud Light/SEDA League Banquet

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Players of C Chichirika Bud Cup champion C Bwiibwiis Barracuda show their trophies

The league's MVPs pose for a group photo.

Members of Thursday B division and Bud Cup champion Brothers B pose with their trophies during the awards ceremony for the 2009 Bud Light/Saipan Electronic Dart Association League on Sunday at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

Members of Ladies division third placer Jonny's.com receive their trophies.

The Bwiibwiis Mermaids win the sportsmanship award in the Ladies division.

C Chichirika champion Bwiibwiis receive their p trophies.

Players of C Kingfisher champion Jonny's Wasabe get individual trophies.

MARPAC's Jojo Camacho gives his brief remarks during the awards ceremony.

Members of Tuesday B Bud Cup champion Bring It On 1 show their trophies.

USSP Young Guns show their runner-up trophy in the C Kingfisher division.

Favre, Viking defense rough up Romo, Cowboys

This is why Brett Favre said he was coming back. And back he is–maybe better than ever.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Palmer's birdie gives him Sony title

Ryan Palmer made a 50-foot chip shot on the final hole that hit the pin and left him a tap-in for birdie and a one-shot victory over Robert Allenby in the Sony Open on Sunday.

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Percy notches first King of Lanes crown

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Percy Omechelang showed up for the Saipan Bowling Association's season-ending 2009 Budweiser King of the Lanes Tournament just to sweat out, but got more than what he aimed for after winning the championship against 15 other qualifiers.

Battling flu, Omechelang beat Alex Castro in two games, 384-361, to rule the 2009 Budweiser King of the Lanes Tournament on Sunday at the Capital Bowling Center.

The IT&E employee said he had second thoughts in joining the season finale, as he has not been feeling well for the past two weeks.

"I have this flu on and off for the past two weeks. I have colds and I am feeling weak, so I thought I should stay home and rest. But then, I said if I play and sweat a lot, maybe I could feel better, so I wasn't really focus on winning, but more on feeling better," Omechelang said.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Percy Omechelang poses for *Saipan Tribune* after ruling the King of the Lanes tournament on Sunday at the Capital Bowling Center.

In the nine-game qualifying roll-off, Omechelang, in between wiping his sweat and feeling a slight headache, was in tough form, knocking down 198 pins in Game 1, the second best in that game behind Jorge Soledad's 212.

Omechelang played even better in the next five games, posting more than 200 pinfalls in four occasions. He had his best showing in Game 5, recording 244 pinfalls, made 237 in Game 6, 208 in Game 4, 210 in Game 2 and 179 in Game 3. Omechelang slowed down in the last three games (181, 190, and 165), but he still emerged as the top finisher among 16 qualifiers.

His 1,812 pinfalls in nine games automatically advanced Omechelang to the championship round, where he earned a twice-to-beat advantage.

Richard Leong and Alex Castro joined Omechelang in the stepladder finals with the former finishing second in the qualifier with his 1,742 pinfalls against the 1,738 of the third placer Castro.

Leong and Castro then dueled in a one-game roll-off for the right to face

See PERCY on Page 26

Sakisat, Tagabuel lift Chura to win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Pitcher Mel Sakisat and second baseman Ben Tagabuel were on target Friday night, leading Chura to a 20-14 win over San Roque in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Sakisat was flawless at bat, hitting 4-for-4 and scored three runs and three RBIs, while Tagabuel went 4-for-5, giving Chura its fifth win in six games. Tagabuel also recorded three RBIs and tallied two runs. Catcher Ben Camacho was only 1-for-3 at bat, but his made a two-run homer in the fourth inning, while Pete Tomokane was 2-for-5, but drilled a two-RBI double in the seventh inning.

See SAKISAT on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mel Sakisat, who plays for Chura, went 4-for-4 at bat to lead his team to a 20-14 win over San Roque during their game in the Chamolinian softball league on Friday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

NMASA elects board directors

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association named nine individuals as members of its board of directors during the group's January meeting early this month at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Elected to the NMASA board were Michael White, Jeff Race, Jess Wabol, Jordon Kosam, Gil Birnbrich, Rose Igitol, Tony Rogolifoi, Elias Rangamar, and Ed Salas. The group is scheduled to meet on Jan. 21 to choose its officers.

White is the current NMASA president, while Race served as vice president of the 2009 board and is representing the Northern Marianas Islands Tennis Association. Kosam and Wabol are from the Refaluwasch Golf Association, Igitol and Rogolifoi are from Saipan Major League, Rangamar is representing basketball and athletics, and Birnbrich and Salas, are representatives from canoe racing and volleyball, respectively.

NMASA board members and its officers will serve a one-year term and this year their main focus will be the CNMI's preparation for the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau.

See NMASA on Page 26

White | Race | Wabol

Kosam | Birnbrich | Igitol

Rogolifoi | Rangamar | Salas

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Noni Saipan's Ivan De Vero, center, is hounded by Diamond's Elmer Esdrelon, right, and Brendon Talania during their game in the regular season of the PILCOWA caging at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

PILCOWA playoffs to start Thursday

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Teams in the 2009 PILCOWA Basketball League are praying that rain would go away this week as the second edition of the annual caging is set to start its playoff round this Thursday at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

It's been more than a week since PILCOWA had a game at the Garapan court due to constant rain. The last time the league had matches was on Jan. 7. Two more matches in the

See PILCOWA on Page 26